[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Other uses of](/wiki/Template:Other_uses_of) [Template:Pp-semi](/wiki/Template:Pp-semi) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Coord](/wiki/Template:Coord) [Template:Infobox country](/wiki/Template:Infobox_country)

**Sweden** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en) [Template:Respell](/wiki/Template:Respell); [Template:Lang-sv](/wiki/Template:Lang-sv) [Template:IPA-sv](/wiki/Template:IPA-sv) [Template:Audio](/wiki/Template:Audio)), officially the **Kingdom of Sweden** ([Swedish](/wiki/Swedish_language): [Template:Audio](/wiki/Template:Audio)), is a [Scandinavian](/wiki/Scandinavia) country in [Northern Europe](/wiki/Northern_Europe). It borders [Norway](/wiki/Norway) to the west and [Finland](/wiki/Finland) to the east, and is connected to [Denmark](/wiki/Denmark) in the southwest by a [bridge-tunnel](/wiki/Øresund_Bridge) across the [Öresund](/wiki/Øresund). At [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), Sweden is the third-largest country in the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) by area, with a total population of over 9.8 million.[[1]](#cite_note-1) Sweden consequently has a low population density of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), with the highest concentration in the southern half of the country. Approximately 85% of the population lives in urban areas.[[2]](#cite_note-2) Southern Sweden is predominantly [agricultural](/wiki/Agriculture), while the north is heavily forested. Sweden is part of the geographical area of [Fennoscandia](/wiki/Fennoscandia). The [climate](/wiki/Sweden#Climate) is in general very mild for its northerly latitude due to significant maritime influence, that in spite of this still retains warm continental summers.

[Germanic](/wiki/Germanic_peoples) peoples have inhabited Sweden since prehistoric times, emerging into history as the [Geats](/wiki/Geats)/Götar and [Swedes/Svear](/wiki/Swedes_(Germanic_tribe)) and constituting the sea peoples known as the [Norsemen](/wiki/Norsemen). Sweden emerged as an independent and unified country during the [Middle Ages](/wiki/Middle_Ages). In the 17th century, it expanded its territories to form the [Swedish Empire](/wiki/Swedish_Empire), which became one of the [great powers](/wiki/Great_power) of Europe until the early 18th century. Swedish territories outside the Scandinavian Peninsula were gradually lost during the 18th and 19th centuries, ending with the annexation of present-day Finland by [Russia](/wiki/Russian_Empire) in 1809. The last war in which Sweden was directly involved was in 1814, when Norway was militarily forced into [personal union](/wiki/Union_between_Sweden_and_Norway). Since then, Sweden has been at peace, maintaining an official policy of [neutrality](/wiki/Swedish_neutrality) in foreign affairs.[[3]](#cite_note-3) The union with Norway was [peacefully dissolved](/wiki/Dissolution_of_the_union_between_Norway_and_Sweden) in 1905, leading to Sweden's current borders. Though it was formally neutral through both world wars, Sweden engaged in [humanitarian](/wiki/Humanitarianism) efforts, such as taking in refugees from [German-occupied Europe](/wiki/German-occupied_Europe). After the end of the [Cold War](/wiki/Cold_War), Sweden joined the European Union on 1[Template:NbspJanuary](/wiki/Template:Nbsp) 1995, but declined [NATO](/wiki/NATO) membership, as well as [Eurozone](/wiki/Eurozone) membership following a [referendum](/wiki/Swedish_euro_referendum,_2003). It is also a member of the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations), the [Nordic Council](/wiki/Nordic_Council), [Council of Europe](/wiki/Council_of_Europe), the [World Trade Organization](/wiki/World_Trade_Organization) and the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](/wiki/Organisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development) (OECD).

Today, Sweden is a [constitutional monarchy](/wiki/Constitutional_monarchy) and [parliamentary](/wiki/Parliamentary_system) [democracy](/wiki/Parliamentary_democracy), with a [monarch](/wiki/Monarchy_of_Sweden) as [head of state](/wiki/Head_of_state). The [capital city](/wiki/Capital_city) is [Stockholm](/wiki/Stockholm), which is also the most populous city in the country. [Legislative power](/wiki/Legislature) is vested in the 349-member [unicameral](/wiki/Unicameral) [*Riksdag*](/wiki/Riksdag). [Executive power](/wiki/Executive_(government)) is exercised by the [government](/wiki/Government_of_Sweden) chaired by the [prime minister](/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Sweden). Sweden is a [unitary state](/wiki/Unitary_state), currently divided into [21 counties](/wiki/Counties_of_Sweden) and [290 municipalities](/wiki/Municipalities_of_Sweden). Sweden maintains a [Nordic social welfare system](/wiki/Nordic_model) that provides [universal health care](/wiki/Universal_health_care) and [tertiary education](/wiki/Tertiary_education) for its citizens. It has the [world's eighth-highest per capita income](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(nominal)_per_capita) and ranks highly in numerous metrics of national performance, including [quality of life](/wiki/Quality_of_life), health, [education](/wiki/Education_Index), protection of [civil liberties](/wiki/Freedom_in_the_World), economic competitiveness, [equality](/wiki/Gini_coefficient), [prosperity](/wiki/Legatum_Prosperity_Index) and [human development](/wiki/Human_Development_Index).[[4]](#cite_note-4)[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6)[[7]](#cite_note-7)[[8]](#cite_note-8)

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## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The modern name *Sweden* is derived through [back-formation](/wiki/Back-formation) from Old English *Swēoþēod*, which meant "people of the Swedes" ([Old Norse](/wiki/Old_Norse) *Svíþjóð*, [Latin](/wiki/Latin) *Suetidi*). This word is derived from *Sweon/Sweonas* (Old Norse *Sviar*, Latin S*uiones*). The Swedish name *Sverige* (a compound of the words *Svea* and *Rike*, with [lenition](/wiki/Lenition) of the consonant [k], first recorded in the cognate *Swēorice* in [Beowulf](/wiki/Beowulf))[[9]](#cite_note-9) literally means "Realm of the [Swedes](/wiki/Swedes_(Germanic_tribe))", excluding the [Geats](/wiki/Geats) in [Götaland](/wiki/Götaland).

Variations of the name *Sweden* are used in most languages, with the exception of [Danish](/wiki/Danish_language) and [Norwegian](/wiki/Norwegian_language) using *Sverige*, [Faroese](/wiki/Faroese_language) *Svøríki*, [Icelandic](/wiki/Icelandic_language) *Svíþjóð*, and the more notable exception of some [Finnic languages](/wiki/Finnic_languages) where *Ruotsi* ([Finnish](/wiki/Finnish_language)) and *Rootsi* ([Estonian](/wiki/Estonian_language)) are used, names commonly considered etymologically related to the English name for [Russia](/wiki/Russia), referring to the people, [*Rus'*](/wiki/Rus'_people), originally from the coastal areas of [Roslagen](/wiki/Roslagen), [Uppland](/wiki/Uppland).

The etymology of *Swedes*, and thus *Sweden*, is generally not agreed upon but may derive from [Proto-Germanic](/wiki/Proto-Germanic_language) *Swihoniz* meaning "one's own",[[10]](#cite_note-10) referring to one's own Germanic tribe.

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Template:Refimprove section](/wiki/Template:Refimprove_section) [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

### Prehistory[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|A](/wiki/File:Vendel_era_helmet_(942).jpg) [Vendel-era](/wiki/Vendel_era) helmet, at the Swedish Museum of National Antiquities. Sweden's prehistory begins in the [Allerød oscillation](/wiki/Allerød_oscillation),[Template:According to whom](/wiki/Template:According_to_whom) a warm period around 12,000 BC, with Late [Palaeolithic](/wiki/Palaeolithic) [reindeer](/wiki/Reindeer)-hunting camps of the [Bromme culture](/wiki/Bromme_culture) at the edge of the ice in what is now the country's southernmost province, [Scania](/wiki/Scania). This period was characterised by small bands of [hunter-gatherer-fishers](/wiki/Hunter-gatherer) using [flint](/wiki/Flint) technology.

Sweden is first described in a written source in [*Germania*](/wiki/Germania_(book)) by [Tacitus](/wiki/Tacitus) in 98 AD. In [Germania 44 and 45](/wiki/S:Germania#XLIV) he mentions the Swedes (*Suiones*) as a powerful tribe (*distinguished not merely for their arms and men, but for their powerful fleets*) with ships that had a [prow](/wiki/Prow) at each end ([longships](/wiki/Longship)). Which kings (*kuningaz*) ruled these Suiones is unknown, but [Norse mythology](/wiki/Norse_mythology) presents a long line of legendary and semi-legendary kings going back to the last centuries BC. As for literacy in Sweden itself, the [runic script](/wiki/Runic_alphabet) was in use among the south Scandinavian elite by at least the 2nd century AD, but all that has come down to the present from the Roman Period is curt inscriptions on artefacts, mainly of male names, demonstrating that the people of south Scandinavia spoke [Proto-Norse](/wiki/Proto-Norse) at the time, a language ancestral to Swedish and other [North Germanic languages](/wiki/North_Germanic_languages).[Template:Primary source inline](/wiki/Template:Primary_source_inline)

In the 6th century [Jordanes](/wiki/Jordanes) named two tribes he calls the *Suehans* and the *Suetidi* who lived in [Scandza](/wiki/Scandza). These two names are both considered to refer to the same tribe. The *Suehans*, he says, have very fine horses just as the *Thyringi* tribe (*alia vero gens ibi moratur Suehans, quae velud Thyringi equis utuntur eximiis*). [Snorri Sturluson](/wiki/Snorri_Sturluson) wrote that the contemporary Swedish king [Adils](/wiki/Adils) (Eadgils) had the finest horses of his day. The Suehans were the suppliers of black fox skins for the Roman market. Then Jordanes names the *Suetidi*, which is considered to be the Latin form of *Svíþjóð*, the Old Norse name for the Swedes. He writes that the Suetidi are the tallest of men together with the [Dani](/wiki/Danes_(Germanic_tribe)) who were of the same stock. Later he mentions other Scandinavian tribes for being of the same height.[Template:Primary source inline](/wiki/Template:Primary_source_inline)

### The Vikings[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Vikings-Voyages.png)[Viking](/wiki/Viking) expeditions (blue): going into Russia were Swedish Vikings.

The Swedish [Viking Age](/wiki/Viking_Age) lasted roughly from the 8th century to the 11th century. It is believed that Swedish Vikings and [Gutar](/wiki/Gutar) mainly travelled east and south, going to Finland, the [Baltic countries](/wiki/Baltic_countries), Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, the [Black Sea](/wiki/Black_Sea) and even as far as [Baghdad](/wiki/Baghdad). Their routes passed [through the Dnieper](/wiki/The_Trade_Route_from_the_Varangians_to_the_Greeks) south to [Constantinople](/wiki/Constantinople), on which they carried out numerous raids. The [Byzantine Emperor](/wiki/Byzantine_Emperor) [Theophilos](/wiki/Theophilos_(emperor)) noticed their great skills in war, and invited them to serve as his personal bodyguard, known as the [Varangian Guard](/wiki/Varangian_Guard). The Swedish Vikings, called [Rus](/wiki/Rus_(people)) are believed to be the founding fathers of [Kievan Rus'](/wiki/Kievan_Rus'). The Arab traveller [Ibn Fadlan](/wiki/Ibn_Fadlan) described these Vikings as follows:

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The actions of these Swedish Vikings are commemorated on many [runestones](/wiki/Runestone) in Sweden, such as the [Greece runestones](/wiki/Greece_runestones) and the [Varangian runestones](/wiki/Varangian_runestones). There was also considerable participation in expeditions westwards, which are commemorated on stones such as the [England runestones](/wiki/England_runestones). The last major Swedish Viking expedition appears to have been the ill-fated expedition of [Ingvar the Far-Travelled](/wiki/Ingvar_the_Far-Travelled) to [Serkland](/wiki/Serkland), the region south-east of the [Caspian Sea](/wiki/Caspian_Sea). Its members are commemorated on the [Ingvar runestones](/wiki/Ingvar_runestones), none of which mentions any survivor. What happened to the crew is unknown, but it is believed that they died of sickness.

### The Kingdom of Sweden[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Synthesis](/wiki/Template:Synthesis) It is not known when and how the kingdom of Sweden was born, but the [list of Swedish monarchs](/wiki/List_of_Swedish_monarchs) is drawn from the first kings known to have ruled both [Svealand](/wiki/Svealand) (Sweden) and Götaland (Gothia) as one province, beginning with [Eric the Victorious](/wiki/Eric_the_Victorious). Sweden and Gothia were two separate nations long before that into antiquity. It is not known how long they existed: the epic poem *Beowulf* describes semi-legendary [Swedish-Geatish wars](/wiki/Swedish-Geatish_wars) in the 6th century. "*Götaland*" in this sense mainly includes the provinces of [Östergötland](/wiki/Östergötland) (East Gothia) and [Västergötland](/wiki/Västergötland) (West Gothia). The island of [Gotland](/wiki/Gotland) was disputed by other than Swedes, at this time (Danish, Hanseatic, and Gotland-domestic). [Småland](/wiki/Småland) was at that time of little interest to anyone due to the deep pine forests, and only the city of [Kalmar](/wiki/Kalmar) with its castle was of importance. The south-west parts of the Scandinavian peninsula consisted of three Danish provinces (Scania, [Blekinge](/wiki/Blekinge) and [Halland](/wiki/Halland)). North of Halland Denmark had a direct border to Norway and its province [Bohuslän](/wiki/Bohuslän). But there were Swedish settlements in south-west Finland, and along the southern coastline of [Norrland](/wiki/Norrland).

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Suecia_1-064_;_Gambla_Ubsala_högar.png)[Gamla Uppsala](/wiki/Gamla_Uppsala), (Old Uppsala), a site of religious and political importance in the early days of Sweden

During the early stages of the Scandinavian Viking Age, [Ystad](/wiki/Ystad) in [Danish](/wiki/Denmark) province Scania and [Paviken](/wiki/Paviken) on Gotland, were flourishing centres of trade, but they were not parts of the early Swedish Kingdom. Remains of what is believed to have been a large market dating from 600–700 AD have been found in Ystad.[[11]](#cite_note-11) In Paviken, an important centre of trade in the Baltic region during the 9th and 10th century, remains have been found of a large Viking Age harbour with shipbuilding yards and handicraft industries. Between 800 and 1000, trade brought an abundance of silver to Gotland, and according to some scholars, the Gotlanders of this era hoarded more silver than the rest of the population of Scandinavia combined.[[11]](#cite_note-11) [St. Ansgar](/wiki/St._Ansgar) is usually credited with introducing Christianity in 829, but the new religion did not begin to fully replace [paganism](/wiki/Paganism) until the 12th century. During the 11th century, Christianity became the most prevalent religion, and from 1050 Sweden is counted as a Christian nation. The period between 1100 and 1400 was characterised by internal power struggles and competition among the Nordic kingdoms. Swedish kings began to expand the Swedish-controlled territory in Finland, creating conflicts with the Rus who no longer had any connection with Sweden.[[12]](#cite_note-12) Except for the provinces of Scania, Blekinge and Halland, in the south-west of the Scandinavian peninsula which were parts of the Kingdom of Denmark during this time, [feudalism](/wiki/Feudalism) never developed in Sweden as it did in the rest of Europe.[[13]](#cite_note-13) The peasantry therefore remained largely a class of free farmers throughout most of Swedish history. [Slavery](/wiki/Slavery) (also called [thralldom](/wiki/Thrall)) was not common in Sweden,[[14]](#cite_note-14) and what slavery there was tended to be driven out of existence by the spread of Christianity, the difficulty in obtaining slaves from the lands east of the Baltic Sea, and by the development of cities before the 16th century.[[15]](#cite_note-15) Indeed, both slavery and [serfdom](/wiki/Serfdom) were abolished altogether by a decree of [King Magnus IV](/wiki/Magnus_IV_of_Sweden) in 1335. Former slaves tended to be absorbed into the peasantry, and some became labourers in the towns. Still, Sweden remained a poor and economically backward country in which barter was the means of exchange. For instance, the farmers of the province of [Dalsland](/wiki/Dalsland) would transport their butter to the mining districts of Sweden and exchange it there for iron, which they would then take to the coast and trade for fish, which they consumed, while the iron would be shipped abroad.[[16]](#cite_note-16) [thumb|A](/wiki/File:Valdemar_Atterdag_brandskattar_Visby_(1882).jpg) [romantic nationalist](/wiki/Romantic_nationalism) interpretation of [Valdemar IV](/wiki/Valdemar_IV) taking control over [Gotland](/wiki/Gotland). The final battle outside the walls of Visby in 1361 ended with a massacre of 1,800 defenders of the city.

In the middle of the 14th century, Sweden was struck by the [Black Death](/wiki/Black_Death).[[17]](#cite_note-17) The population of Sweden and most of Europe was seriously decimated. And the population (at same territory) as existed by 1348 did not reach the same numbers again until the beginning of the 19th century. One third of the population died during 1349–1351. During this period, the Swedish cities began to acquire greater rights and were strongly influenced by German merchants of the [Hanseatic League](/wiki/Hanseatic_League), active especially at [Visby](/wiki/Visby). In 1319, Sweden and Norway were united under King Magnus Eriksson, and in 1397 Queen [Margaret I of Denmark](/wiki/Margaret_I_of_Denmark) effected the personal union of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark through the [Kalmar Union](/wiki/Kalmar_Union). However, Margaret's successors, whose rule was also centred in Denmark, were unable to control the Swedish nobility.

A large number of children inherited the Swedish crown over the course of the kingdom's existence; consequently real power was held for long periods by regents (notably those of the [Sture](/wiki/Sture) family) chosen by the Swedish parliament. King [Christian II of Denmark](/wiki/Christian_II_of_Denmark), who asserted his claim to Sweden by force of arms, ordered a massacre in 1520 of Swedish nobles in Stockholm. This came to be known as the "[Stockholm blood bath](/wiki/Stockholm_blood_bath)" and stirred the Swedish nobility to new resistance and, on 6 June (now Sweden's national holiday) in 1523, they made [Gustav Vasa](/wiki/Gustav_Vasa) their king.[[18]](#cite_note-18) This is sometimes considered as the [foundation of modern Sweden](/wiki/Foundation_of_modern_Sweden). Shortly afterwards he rejected Catholicism and led Sweden into the [Protestant Reformation](/wiki/Protestant_Reformation).

The Hanseatic League had been officially formed at [Lübeck](/wiki/Lübeck) on the Baltic coast of [Northern Germany](/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire) in 1356. The Hanseatic League sought civil and commercial privileges from the princes and royalty of the countries and cities along the coasts of the Baltic Sea.[[19]](#cite_note-19) In exchange, they offered a certain amount of protection. Having their own navy, the Hansa were able to sweep the Baltic Sea free of pirates.[[20]](#cite_note-20) The privileges obtained by the Hansa included assurances that only Hansa citizens would be allowed to trade from the ports where they were located. They sought agreement to be free of all customs and taxes. With these concessions, Lübeck merchants flocked to Stockholm, where they soon came to dominate the city's economic life and made the port city of Stockholm into the leading commercial and industrial city of Sweden.[[21]](#cite_note-21) Under the Hanseatic trade, two-thirds of Stockholm's imports consisted of textiles and one-third of salt. The main exports from Sweden were iron and copper.[[22]](#cite_note-22) However, the Swedes began to resent the monopoly trading position of the Hansa (mostly German citizens), and to resent the income they felt they lost to the Hansa. Consequently, when Gustav Vasa or [Gustav I](/wiki/Gustav_I) broke the monopoly power of the Hanseatic League he was regarded as a hero by the Swedish people.[[23]](#cite_note-23) History now views Gustav I as the father of the modern Swedish nation. The foundations laid by Gustav would take time to develop. Furthermore, when Sweden did develop, freed itself from the Hanseatic League, and entered its golden era, the fact that the peasantry had traditionally been free meant that more of the economic benefits flowed back to them rather than going to a feudal landowning class.[[24]](#cite_note-24)

### Swedish Empire[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[thumb|The](/wiki/File:Swedish_Empire_(1560-1815)_en2.png) [Swedish Empire](/wiki/Swedish_Empire) between 1560 and 1815

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

During the 17th century Sweden emerged as a European [great power](/wiki/Great_power). Before the emergence of the Swedish Empire, Sweden was a poor and scarcely populated country on the fringe of European civilisation, with no significant power or reputation. Sweden rose to prominence on a continental scale during the tenure of king [Gustavus Adolphus](/wiki/Gustavus_Adolphus_of_Sweden), seizing territories from Russia and [Poland–Lithuania](/wiki/Polish–Lithuanian_Commonwealth) in multiple conflicts, including the [Thirty Years' War](/wiki/Thirty_Years'_War).

During the Thirty Years' War, Sweden conquered approximately half of the Holy Roman states. Gustav Adolphus planned to become the new [Holy Roman Emperor](/wiki/Holy_Roman_Emperor), ruling over a united Scandinavia and the Holy Roman states, but he died at the [Battle of Lützen](/wiki/Battle_of_Lützen_(1632)) in 1632. After the [Battle of Nördlingen](/wiki/Battle_of_Nördlingen_(1634)), Sweden's only significant military defeat of the war, pro-Swedish sentiment among the German states faded. These German provinces excluded themselves from Swedish power one by one, leaving Sweden with only a few northern German territories: [Swedish Pomerania](/wiki/Swedish_Pomerania), [Bremen-Verden](/wiki/Bremen-Verden) and [Wismar](/wiki/Wismar). [thumb|left|Stockholm in mid-17th century](/wiki/File:Suecia_1-054_;_Sodra_Bancohuset.jpg) In the middle of the 17th century Sweden was the third-largest country in Europe by land area, only surpassed by Russia and Spain. Sweden reached its largest territorial extent under the rule of [Charles X](/wiki/Charles_X_of_Sweden) after the [treaty of Roskilde](/wiki/Treaty_of_Roskilde) in 1658.[[25]](#cite_note-25)[[26]](#cite_note-26) The foundation of Sweden's success during this period is credited to Gustav I's major changes on the Swedish economy in the 16th century, and his introduction of [Protestantism](/wiki/Protestantism).[[27]](#cite_note-27) In the 17th century, Sweden was engaged in many wars, for example with the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, with both sides competing for territories of today's [Baltic states](/wiki/Baltic_states), with the disastrous [Battle of Kircholm](/wiki/Battle_of_Kircholm) being one of the highlights.[[28]](#cite_note-28) One-third of the Finnish population died in the devastating [famine](/wiki/Famine) that struck the country in 1696.[[29]](#cite_note-29) Famine also hit Sweden, killing roughly 10% of Sweden's population.[[30]](#cite_note-30) The Swedes conducted a series of invasions into the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, known as the [Deluge](/wiki/Deluge_(history)). After more than half a century of almost constant warfare, the Swedish economy had deteriorated. It became the lifetime task of Charles' son, [Charles XI](/wiki/Charles_XI_of_Sweden), to rebuild the economy and refit the army. His legacy to his son, the coming ruler of Sweden, [Charles XII](/wiki/Charles_XII_of_Sweden), was one of the finest arsenals in the world, a large standing army and a great fleet. Sweden's largest threat at this time, Russia, had a larger army but was far behind in both equipment and training.

[thumb|Death of](/wiki/File:Battle_of_Lutzen.jpg) [Gustav II Adolf](/wiki/Gustav_II_Adolf) at the [Battle of Lützen](/wiki/Battle_of_Lützen_(1632)) After the [Battle of Narva](/wiki/Battle_of_Narva_(1700)) in 1700, one of the first battles of the [Great Northern War](/wiki/Great_Northern_War), the Russian army was so severely devastated that Sweden had an open chance to invade Russia. However, Charles did not pursue the Russian army, instead turning against Poland–Lithuania and defeating the Polish king, [Augustus II](/wiki/Augustus_II), and his Saxon allies at the [Battle of Klissow](/wiki/Battle_of_Klissow) in 1702. This gave Russia time to rebuild and modernise its army.

After the success of invading Poland, Charles decided to make an attempt at invading Russia, but this ended in a decisive Russian victory at the [Battle of Poltava](/wiki/Battle_of_Poltava) in 1709. After a long march exposed to [Cossack](/wiki/Cossack) raids, the Russian Tsar [Peter the Great's](/wiki/Peter_the_Great) [scorched-earth](/wiki/Scorched-earth) techniques and [the extremely cold winter of 1709](/wiki/Great_Frost_of_1709), the Swedes stood weakened with a shattered morale and were enormously outnumbered against the Russian army at Poltava. The defeat meant the beginning of the end for the Swedish Empire. In addition, [the plague raging in East Central Europe](/wiki/The_plague_during_the_Great_Northern_War) devastated the Swedish dominions and reached Central Sweden in 1710.

[thumb|left|The](/wiki/File:Marten's_Poltava.jpg) [Battle of Poltava](/wiki/Battle_of_Poltava) in 1709. In the years following Poltava, Russia and her allies occupied all the [Swedish dominions](/wiki/Dominions_of_Sweden) on the Baltic coast and even Finland. Charles XII attempted to invade Norway in 1716, but he was shot dead at [Fredriksten](/wiki/Fredriksten) fortress in 1718. The Swedes were not militarily defeated at Fredriksten, but the whole structure and organisation of the campaign fell apart with the king's death, and the army withdrew.

Forced to cede large areas of land in the [Treaty of Nystad](/wiki/Treaty_of_Nystad) in 1721, Sweden also lost its place as an empire and as the dominant state on the Baltic Sea. With Sweden's lost influence, Russia emerged as an empire and became one of Europe's dominant nations. As the war finally ended in 1721, Sweden had lost an estimated 200,000 men, 150,000 of those from the area of present-day Sweden and 50,000 from the [Finnish](/wiki/History_of_Finland#17th_century_–_the_Swedish_Empire) part of Sweden.[[31]](#cite_note-31) In the 18th century, Sweden did not have enough resources to maintain its territories outside Scandinavia, and most of them were lost, culminating with the loss in 1809 of eastern Sweden to Russia, which became the highly autonomous [Grand Principality of Finland](/wiki/Grand_Duchy_of_Finland) in [Imperial Russia](/wiki/Russian_Empire).

In interest of re-establishing Swedish dominance in the Baltic Sea, Sweden allied itself against its traditional ally and benefactor, France, in the [Napoleonic Wars](/wiki/Napoleonic_Wars). Sweden's role in the [Battle of Leipzig](/wiki/Battle_of_Leipzig) gave it the authority to force Denmark–Norway, an ally of France, to cede Norway to the King of Sweden on 14 January 1814 in exchange for northern German provinces, at the [Treaty of Kiel](/wiki/Treaty_of_Kiel). The Norwegian attempts to keep their status as a sovereign state were rejected by the Swedish king, [Charles XIII](/wiki/Charles_XIII). He launched a military campaign against Norway on 27 July 1814, ending in the [Convention of Moss](/wiki/Convention_of_Moss), which forced Norway into a [personal union](/wiki/Union_between_Sweden_and_Norway) with Sweden under the Swedish crown, which lasted until 1905. The 1814 campaign was the last time Sweden was at war.

### Modern history[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|left|upright|Illustration of starvation in northern Sweden,](/wiki/File:Starvation_image_from_Fäderneslandet_1867.jpg) [Famine of 1866–1868](/wiki/Finnish_famine_of_1866–1868) There was a significant population increase during the 18th and 19th centuries, which the writer [Esaias Tegnér](/wiki/Esaias_Tegnér) in 1833 attributed to "the peace, the [smallpox vaccine](/wiki/Smallpox_vaccine), and the potatoes".[[32]](#cite_note-32) Between 1750 and 1850, the population in Sweden doubled. According to some scholars, mass emigration to America became the only way to prevent famine and rebellion; over 1% of the population emigrated annually during the 1880s.[[33]](#cite_note-33) Nevertheless, Sweden remained poor, retaining a nearly entirely agricultural economy even as Denmark and Western European countries began to industrialise.[[33]](#cite_note-33)[[34]](#cite_note-34)[thumb|Swedish emigrants boarding ship in](/wiki/File:Farewell_to_home,_Göteborg,_1905.jpg) [Gothenburg](/wiki/Gothenburg) in 1905 Many looked towards America for a better life during this time. It is thought that between 1850 and 1910 more than one million Swedes moved to the United States.[[35]](#cite_note-35) In the early 20th century, more Swedes lived in Chicago than in [Gothenburg](/wiki/Gothenburg) (Sweden's second largest city).[[36]](#cite_note-36) Most Swedish [immigrants](/wiki/Immigrants) moved to the [Midwestern United States](/wiki/Midwestern_United_States), with a large population in [Minnesota](/wiki/Minnesota), with a few others moving to other parts of the United States and Canada.

Despite the slow rate of industrialisation into the 19th century, many important changes were taking place in the agrarian economy due to constant innovations and a rapid population growth.[[37]](#cite_note-37) These innovations included government-sponsored programmes of [enclosure](/wiki/Enclosure), aggressive exploitation of agricultural lands, and the introduction of new crops such as the potato.[[37]](#cite_note-37) Because the Swedish peasantry had never been enserfed as elsewhere in Europe,[[38]](#cite_note-38) the Swedish farming culture began to take on a critical role in Swedish politics, which has continued through modern times with modern Agrarian party (now called the Centre Party).[[39]](#cite_note-39) Between 1870 and 1914, Sweden began developing the industrialised economy that exists today.[[40]](#cite_note-40) Strong grassroots movements sprung up in Sweden during the latter half of the 19th century (trade unions, [temperance](/wiki/Temperance_movement) groups, and independent religious groups), creating a strong foundation of democratic principles. In 1889 The Swedish Social Democratic Party was founded. These movements precipitated Sweden's migration into a modern parliamentary democracy, achieved by the time of World War I. As the [Industrial Revolution](/wiki/Industrial_Revolution) progressed during the 20th century, people gradually moved into cities to work in factories and became involved in socialist unions. A communist revolution was avoided in 1917, following the re-introduction of [parliamentarism](/wiki/Parliamentarism), and the country was [democratised](/wiki/Democracy).

### World War I and World War II[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Sweden was officially neutral during [World War I](/wiki/World_War_I), although, under German pressure, they did take steps which were detrimental to the Allied powers including mining the [Øresund](/wiki/Øresund) channel, thus closing it to Allied shipping, and allowing the Germans to use Swedish facilities and the Swedish cipher to transmit secret messages to their overseas embassies.[[41]](#cite_note-41) Sweden also allowed volunteers fighting for the [White Guards](/wiki/White_Guard_(Finland)) together with the Germans against the Reds and Russians in the [Finnish Civil War](/wiki/Finnish_Civil_War), and briefly occupied the Aland islands in co-operation with Germany.

[thumb|left|A Swedish soldier during World War II. Sweden remained neutral during the conflict.](/wiki/File:Swedish_soldier_during_ww2.JPG)

As in the first world war, Sweden remained officially neutral during [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II), although its neutrality during World War II has been disputed.[[42]](#cite_note-42)[[43]](#cite_note-43) Sweden was under German influence for much of the war, as ties to the rest of the world were cut off through blockades.[[42]](#cite_note-42) The Swedish government felt that it was in no position to openly contest Germany,[[44]](#cite_note-44) and therefore made some concessions.[[45]](#cite_note-45) Sweden also supplied steel and machined parts to Germany throughout the war. However, Sweden supported Norwegian resistance, and in 1943 helped [rescue Danish Jews](/wiki/Rescue_of_the_Danish_Jews) from deportation to [Nazi concentration camps](/wiki/Nazi_concentration_camps). The Swedish government also unofficially supported Finland in the [Winter War](/wiki/Winter_War) and the [Continuation War](/wiki/Continuation_War) by allowing volunteers and [materiel](/wiki/Materiel) to be shipped to Finland.

During the last year of the war, Sweden began to play a role in humanitarian efforts, and many refugees, among them several thousand Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe, were rescued thanks to the [Swedish rescue missions to internment camps](/wiki/White_Buses) and partly because Sweden served as a haven for refugees, primarily from the [Nordic countries](/wiki/Nordic_countries) and the Baltic states.[[44]](#cite_note-44) The Swedish diplomat [Raoul Wallenberg](/wiki/Raoul_Wallenberg) and his colleagues ensured the safety of tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews.[[46]](#cite_note-46) Nevertheless, both Swedes and others have argued that Sweden could have done more to oppose the Nazis' war efforts, even if it meant increasing the risk of occupation.[[44]](#cite_note-44)

### Post-war era[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[thumb|Prime Minister](/wiki/File:Olivecrona_erlander_380.jpg) [Tage Erlander](/wiki/Tage_Erlander) (left) was Prime Minister under the ruling [Swedish Social Democratic Party](/wiki/Swedish_Social_Democratic_Party) from 1946 to 1969. Sweden was officially a neutral country and remained outside [NATO](/wiki/NATO) and [Warsaw Pact](/wiki/Warsaw_Pact) membership during the Cold War, but privately Sweden's leadership had strong ties with the United States and other western governments. Following the war, Sweden took advantage of an intact industrial base, social stability and its natural resources to expand its industry to supply the rebuilding of Europe.[[47]](#cite_note-47) Sweden received aid under the [Marshall Plan](/wiki/Marshall_Plan) and participated in the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](/wiki/Organisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development) (OECD). During most of the post-war era, the country was governed by the [Swedish Social Democratic Party](/wiki/Swedish_Social_Democratic_Party) largely in co-operation with [trade unions](/wiki/Swedish_Trade_Union_Confederation) and industry. The government actively pursued an internationally competitive manufacturing sector of primarily large corporations.[[48]](#cite_note-48) Sweden was one of the founding states of the [European Free Trade Area](/wiki/European_Free_Trade_Area) (EFTA). During the 1960s the EFTA countries were often referred to as the **Outer Seven**, as opposed to the [Inner Six](/wiki/Inner_Six) of the then-[European Economic Community](/wiki/European_Economic_Community) (EEC).[[49]](#cite_note-49) Sweden, like countries around the globe, entered a period of economic decline and upheaval following the oil embargoes of 1973–74 and 1978–79.[[50]](#cite_note-50) In the 1980s pillars of Swedish industry were massively restructured.[Template:By whom](/wiki/Template:By_whom) Shipbuilding was discontinued, wood pulp was integrated into modernised paper production, the steel industry was concentrated and specialised, and mechanical engineering was robotised.[[51]](#cite_note-51) Between 1970 and 1990 the overall tax burden rose by over 10%, and the growth was low compared to other countries in Western Europe. Eventually government began to spend over half of the country's gross domestic product. Sweden GDP per capita ranking declined during this time.[[48]](#cite_note-48)

### Recent history[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|right|Sweden joined the European Union in 1995 and signed the](/wiki/File:Tratado_de_Lisboa_13_12_2007_(081).jpg) [Lisbon Treaty](/wiki/Lisbon_Treaty) in 2007. [thumb|](/wiki/File:Fredrik_Reinfeldt,_statsminister_Sverige,_under_Nordiska_radets_session_i_Kopenhamn_2006_(1).jpg)[Fredrik Reinfeldt's](/wiki/Fredrik_Reinfeldt) center-right government ruled Sweden from 2006 until 2014.

A bursting real estate bubble caused by inadequate controls on lending combined with an international recession and a policy switch from anti-unemployment policies to anti-inflationary policies resulted in a fiscal crisis in the early 1990s.[[52]](#cite_note-52) Sweden's GDP declined by around 5%. In 1992, a run on the currency caused the central bank to briefly increase interest rates to 500%.[[53]](#cite_note-53)[[54]](#cite_note-54) The response of the government was to cut spending and institute a multitude of reforms to improve Sweden's competitiveness, among them reducing the [welfare state](/wiki/Welfare_state) and [privatising](/wiki/Privatization) public services and goods. Much of the political establishment promoted EU membership, and [a referendum](/wiki/Swedish_European_Union_membership_referendum,_1994) passed with 52.3% in favour of joining the EU on 13 November 1994. Sweden joined the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) on 1 January 1995. In a 2003 referendum the Swedish electorate [voted against](/wiki/Swedish_euro_referendum,_2003) the country joining the [Euro](/wiki/European_Monetary_Union) currency. In [2006](/wiki/Swedish_general_election,_2006) Sweden got its first majority government for decades as the centre-right [Alliance](/wiki/The_Alliance_(Sweden)) defeated the incumbent Social Democrat government. Following the rapid growth of anti-immigration [Sweden Democrats](/wiki/Sweden_Democrats) and their entrance to the Riksdag in [2010](/wiki/Swedish_general_election,_2010) the Alliance became a minority cabinet.

Sweden remains non-aligned militarily, although it participates in some joint military exercises with NATO and some other countries, in addition to extensive co-operation with other European countries in the area of defence technology and defence industry. Among others, Swedish companies export weapons that were used by the American military in Iraq.[[55]](#cite_note-55) Sweden also has a long history of participating in international military operations, including most recently, [Afghanistan](/wiki/Afghanistan), where Swedish troops are under NATO command, and in EU sponsored peacekeeping operations in [Kosovo](/wiki/Kosovo), [Bosnia and Herzegovina](/wiki/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina), and [Cyprus](/wiki/Cyprus). Sweden also participated in [enforcing](/wiki/2011_military_intervention_in_Libya) a [UN mandated no-fly zone](/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_1973) over Libya during the [Arab Spring](/wiki/Arab_Spring). Sweden held the chair of the European Union from 1 July to 31 December 2009.

In recent decades Sweden has become a more culturally diverse nation due to significant immigration; in 2013 it was estimated that 15 per cent of the population was foreign-born, and an additional 5 per cent of the population were born to two immigrant parents. The influx of immigrants has brought new social challenges. Violent incidents have [periodically occurred](/wiki/Rosengård#Violence_in_the_Community)[[56]](#cite_note-56)[[57]](#cite_note-57) including the [2013 Stockholm riots](/wiki/2013_Stockholm_riots) which broke out following the police shooting of an elderly Portuguese immigrant.[[58]](#cite_note-58) In response to these violent events, the [anti-immigration](/wiki/Far-right_politics) opposition party, the [Swedish Democrats](/wiki/Swedish_Democrats), promoted their anti-immigration policies, while the [left-wing](/wiki/Left-wing_politics) opposition blamed growing inequality caused by the [centre-right](/wiki/Centre-right_politics) government's socioeconomic policies.[[59]](#cite_note-59)[alt=Stefan's face|thumb|Current prime minister, Stefan Löfven](/wiki/File:Stefan_Löfven_edited_and_cropped.jpg)

In 2014 [Stefan Löfven](/wiki/Stefan_Löfven) won the General Election and became the new Swedish Prime Minister. The Sweden Democrats held the balance of power and voted the government's budget down in the Riksdag, but due to agreements between the government and the Alliance, the government was able to hang onto power.[[60]](#cite_note-60) Sweden was heavily affected by the [2015 European migrant crisis](/wiki/2015_European_migrant_crisis), forcing the government to tighten regulations of entry to the country, as Sweden received thousands of asylum seekers per week during the autumn, overwhelming existing structures.[[61]](#cite_note-61)

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|View of the](/wiki/File:Suorvajaure_in_stora_sjofallet_park.jpg) [Stora Sjöfallet National Park](/wiki/Stora_Sjöfallet_National_Park) Situated in Northern Europe, Sweden lies west of the [Baltic Sea](/wiki/Baltic_Sea) and [Gulf of Bothnia](/wiki/Gulf_of_Bothnia), providing a long coastline, and forms the eastern part of the [Scandinavian Peninsula](/wiki/Scandinavian_Peninsula). To the west is the [Scandinavian mountain chain](/wiki/Scandinavian_mountain_chain) (Skanderna), a range that separates Sweden from [Norway](/wiki/Norway). Finland is located to its north-east. It has maritime borders with Denmark, Germany, [Poland](/wiki/Poland), Russia, [Lithuania](/wiki/Lithuania), [Latvia](/wiki/Latvia) and [Estonia](/wiki/Estonia), and it is also linked to Denmark (south-west) by the [Öresund Bridge](/wiki/Öresund_Bridge). Its border with Norway ([1,619 km](/wiki/List_of_countries_and_territories_by_land_borders) long) is the longest uninterrupted border within Europe.

Sweden lies between latitudes [55°](/wiki/55th_parallel_north) and [70° N](/wiki/70th_parallel_north), and mostly between longitudes [11°](/wiki/11th_meridian_east) and [25° E](/wiki/25th_meridian_east) (part of [Stora Drammen](/wiki/Stora_Drammen) island is just west of 11°).

At [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), Sweden is the 55th-largest country in the world,[[62]](#cite_note-62) the 4th-[largest country entirely in Europe](/wiki/Area_and_population_of_European_countries), and the largest in Northern Europe. The lowest elevation in Sweden is in the bay of Lake Hammarsjön, near [Kristianstad](/wiki/Kristianstad), at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) below sea level. The highest point is [Kebnekaise](/wiki/Kebnekaise) at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) [above sea level](/wiki/Above_mean_sea_level).

Sweden has 25 [provinces](/wiki/Provinces_of_Sweden) or *landskap* (landscapes), based on culture, geography and history. While these provinces serve no political or administrative purpose, they play an important role in people's [self-identity](/wiki/Self-concept). The provinces are usually grouped together in three large [*lands*](/wiki/Lands_of_Sweden), parts, the northern Norrland, the central Svealand and southern Götaland. The sparsely populated Norrland encompasses almost 60% of the country. Sweden also has the [Vindelfjällen Nature Reserve](/wiki/Vindelfjällens_Nature_Reserve), one of the largest protected areas in Europe, totaling 562,772 ha (approx. 5,628 km2).

About 15% of Sweden lies north of the [Arctic Circle](/wiki/Arctic_Circle). Southern Sweden is predominantly agricultural, with increasing forest coverage northward. Around 65% of Sweden's total land area is covered with forests. The highest population density is in the [Öresund Region](/wiki/Øresund_Region) in southern Sweden, along the western coast up to central Bohuslän, and in the valley of lake [Mälaren](/wiki/Mälaren) and Stockholm. Gotland and [Öland](/wiki/Öland) are Sweden's largest [islands](/wiki/Islands_of_Sweden); [Vänern](/wiki/Vänern) and [Vättern](/wiki/Vättern) are its largest lakes. Vänern is the third largest in Europe, after [Lake Ladoga](/wiki/Lake_Ladoga) and [Lake Onega](/wiki/Lake_Onega) in Russia. Combined with the third and fourth largest lakes Mälaren and [Hjälmaren](/wiki/Hjälmaren), these lakes take up a significant part of the southern Sweden's area. Sweden's extensive waterway availability throughout the south was exploited with the building of the [Göta Canal](/wiki/Göta_Canal) in the 19th century, shortening the potential distance between the Baltic Sea south of [Norrköping](/wiki/Norrköping) and [Gothenburg](/wiki/Gothenburg) by using the lake and river network to facilitate the canal.[[63]](#cite_note-63)

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[thumb|300px|Sweden map of Köppen climate classification.](/wiki/File:Sweden_map_of_Köppen_climate_classification.svg) Most of Sweden has a [temperate climate](/wiki/Temperate_climate), despite its northern [latitude](/wiki/Latitude), with four distinct seasons and mild temperatures throughout the year. The country can be divided into three types of climate; the southernmost part has an [oceanic climate](/wiki/Oceanic_climate), the central part has a [humid continental climate](/wiki/Humid_continental_climate) and the northernmost part has a [subarctic climate](/wiki/Subarctic_climate). However, Sweden is much warmer and drier than other places at a similar latitude, and even somewhat farther south, mainly because of the [Gulf Stream](/wiki/Gulf_Stream).[[64]](#cite_note-64)[[65]](#cite_note-65) For example, central and southern Sweden has much milder winters than many parts of Russia, Canada, and the northern United States.[[66]](#cite_note-66) Because of its high latitude, the length of daylight varies greatly. North of the Arctic Circle, the sun never sets for part of each summer, and it never rises for part of each winter. In the capital, [Stockholm](/wiki/Stockholm), daylight lasts for more than 18 hours in late June but only around 6 hours in late December. Sweden receives between 1,100 and 1,900 hours of sunshine annually.[[67]](#cite_note-67) [Template:Wide image](/wiki/Template:Wide_image)

Temperatures vary greatly from north to south. Southern and central parts of the country have warm summers and cold winters, with average high temperatures of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in the summer, and average temperatures of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in the winter, while the northern part of the country has shorter, cooler summers and longer, colder and snowier winters, with temperatures that often drop below freezing from September to May. The highest temperature ever recorded in Sweden was [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in [Målilla](/wiki/Målilla) in 1947, while the coldest temperature ever recorded was [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in [Vuoggatjålme](/wiki/Vuoggatjålme) in 1966. Temperatures expected in Sweden are heavily influenced by the large Fennoscandian landmass, as well as continental Europe and western Russia, which allows hot or cool inland air to be easily transported to Sweden. That in turn renders most of Sweden's southern areas having warmer summers than almost everywhere in the nearby [British Isles](/wiki/British_Isles), even matching temperatures found along the continental Atlantic coast as far south as in northern [Spain](/wiki/Spain). In winter however the same high-pressure systems sometimes puts the entire country far below freezing temperatures. There is some maritime moderation from the Atlantic which renders the Swedish continental climate less severe than that of nearby Russia. Even though temperature patterns differ between north and south, the summer climate is surprisingly similar all through the entire country in spite of the large latitudal differences. This is due to the south being surrounded by a greater mass of water, with the wider Baltic Sea and the Atlantic air passing over lowland areas from the south-west.

Apart from the ice-free Atlantic bringing marine air into Sweden tempering winters, the mildness is further explained by prevailing low-pressure systems postponing winter, with the long nights often staying above freezing in the south of the country due to the abundant cloud cover. By the time winter finally breaks through, daylight hours rise quickly, ensuring that daytime temperatures soar quickly in spring. With the greater number of clear nights, frosts remain commonplace quite far south as late as April. The cold winters occur when low-pressure systems are weaker. An example is that the coldest ever month (January 1987) in Stockholm was also the sunniest January month on record.[[68]](#cite_note-68)[[69]](#cite_note-69) The relative strength of low and high-pressure systems of marine and continental air also define the highly variable summers. When hot continental air hits the country, the long days and short nights frequently bring temperatures up to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) or above even in coastal areas. Nights normally remain cool, especially in inland areas. Coastal areas can see so-called *tropical nights* above [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) occur due to the moderating sea influence during warmer summers.[[70]](#cite_note-70) Summers can be cool, especially in the north of the country. Transitional seasons are normally quite extensive and the four-season climate applies to most of Sweden's territory, except in Scania where some years do not record a [meteorological winter](/wiki/Meteorological_winter) (see table below) or in the high Lapland mountains where polar microclimates exist.

On average, most of Sweden receives between [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of precipitation each year, making it considerably drier than the [global average](/wiki/Precipitation_(meteorology)). The south-western part of the country receives more precipitation, between [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), and some mountain areas in the north are estimated to receive up to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). Despite northerly locations, southern and central Sweden may have almost no snow in some winters. Most of Sweden is located in the [rain shadow](/wiki/Rain_shadow) of the Scandinavian Mountains through Norway and north-west Sweden. The blocking of cool and wet air in summer as well as the greater landmass leads to warm and dry summers far north in the country, with quite warm summers at the Bothnia Bay coast at 65 degrees latitude, which is unheard of elsewhere in the world at such northerly coastlines.

**Swedish Meteorological Institute, SMHI's monthly average temperatures of some of their weather stations – for the latest scientific full prefixed thirty-year period 1961–1990** Next will be presented in year 2020. The weather stations are sorted from south towards north by their numbers.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **stn.nr.** | **station** | **Jan** | **Feb** | **Mar** | **Apr** | **May** | **Jun** | **Jul** | **Aug** | **Sep** | **Oct** | **Nov** | **Dec** | ***Annual*** |
| 5337 | Malmö | 0.1 | 0.0 | 2.2 | 6.4 | 11.6 | 15.8 | 17.1 | 16.8 | 13.6 | 9.8 | 5.3 | 1.9 | *8.4* |
| 6203 | Helsingborg | 0.6 | -0.1 | 2.0 | 6.0 | 11.2 | 15.3 | 16.7 | 16.6 | 13.6 | 9.9 | 5.2 | 1.8 | *8.3* |
| 6451 | Växjö | -2.8 | -2.8 | 0.0 | 4.7 | 10.2 | 14.3 | 15.3 | 14.9 | 11.2 | 7.0 | 2.3 | -1.2 | *6.1* |
| 7839 | Visby | -0.5 | -1.2 | 0.7 | 4.1 | 9.5 | 14.0 | 16.4 | 16.0 | 12.5 | 8.6 | 4.3 | 1.2 | *7.1* |
| 7447 | Jönköping | -2.6 | -2.7 | 0.3 | 4.7 | 10.0 | 14.5 | 15.9 | 15.0 | 11.3 | 7.5 | 2.8 | -0.7 | *6.3* |
| 7263 | Göteborg | -0.9 | -0.9 | 2.0 | 6.0 | 11.6 | 15.5 | 16.6 | 16.2 | 12.8 | 9.1 | 4.4 | 1.0 | *7.8* |
| 8323 | Skövde | -2.8 | -2.9 | 0.0 | 4.6 | 10.6 | 15.0 | 16.2 | 15.2 | 11.1 | 7.1 | 2.2 | -1.1 | *6.3* |
| 8634 | Norrköping | -3.0 | -3.2 | 0.0 | 4.5 | 10.4 | 15.1 | 16.6 | 15.5 | 11.3 | 7.2 | 2.2 | -1.4 | *6.3* |
| 9516 | Örebro | -4.0 | -4.0 | -0.5 | 4.3 | 10.7 | 15.3 | 16.5 | 15.3 | 10.9 | 6.6 | 1.3 | -2.4 | *5.8* |
| 9720 | Stockholm Bromma | -3.5 | -3.7 | -0.5 | 4.3 | 10.4 | 15.2 | 16.8 | 15.8 | 11.4 | 7.0 | 2.0 | -1.8 | *6.1* |
| 9739 | Stockholm Arlanda | -4.3 | -4.6 | -1.0 | 3.9 | 9.9 | 14.8 | 16.5 | 15.2 | 10.7 | 6.4 | 1.2 | -2.6 | *5.5* |
| 10458 | Mora | -7.4 | -7.2 | -2.4 | 2.5 | 9.1 | 14.1 | 15.4 | 13.5 | 9.3 | 4.9 | -1.6 | -6.1 | *3.7* |
| 10740 | Gävle | -4.8 | -4.5 | -1.0 | 3.4 | 9.3 | 14.6 | 16.3 | 14.9 | 10.6 | 6.0 | 0.6 | -3.3 | *5.2* |
| 12724 | Sundsvall | -7.5 | -6.3 | -2.3 | 2.5 | 8.2 | 13.8 | 15.2 | 13.8 | 9.4 | 4.8 | -1.5 | -5.7 | *3.6* |
| 13410 | Östersund | -8.9 | -7.6 | -3.5 | 1.3 | 7.6 | 12.5 | 13.9 | 12.7 | 8.2 | 3.8 | -2.4 | -6.3 | *2.6* |
| 14050 | Umeå | -8.7 | -8.3 | -4.0 | 1.4 | 7.6 | 13.3 | 15.6 | 13.8 | 9.0 | 4.0 | -2.3 | -6.4 | *2.9* |
| 15045 | Skellefteå | -10.2 | -8.7 | -4.2 | 1.2 | 7.6 | 13.6 | 15.7 | 13.5 | 8.5 | 3.2 | -3.4 | -7.5 | *2.5* |
| 16288 | Luleå | -12.2 | -11.0 | -6.0 | 0.3 | 6.6 | 13.0 | 15.4 | 13.3 | 8.0 | 2.6 | -4.5 | -9.7 | *1.3* |
| 16395 | Haparanda | -12.1 | -11.4 | -6.8 | -0.5 | 6.1 | 12.8 | 15.4 | 13.2 | 8.0 | 2.5 | -4.2 | -9.5 | *1.1* |
| 16988 | Jokkmokk | -17.5 | -14.9 | -8.6 | -1.1 | 5.9 | 12.2 | 14.3 | 11.8 | 5.7 | -0.2 | -9.3 | -14.6 | *-1.4* |
| 17897 | Tarfala (a mountain peak) | -11.8 | -11.3 | -10.6 | -7.5 | -1.9 | 3.2 | 6.4 | 5.3 | 0.8 | -3.9 | -7.9 | -10.7 | *-4.2* |
| 18076 | Gällivare | -14.3 | -12.5 | -8.4 | -1.9 | 5.0 | 11.0 | 13.0 | 10.7 | 5.6 | -0.6 | -8.1 | -12.2 | *-1.1* |
| 18094 | Kiruna | -13.9 | -12.5 | -8.7 | -3.2 | 3.4 | 9.6 | 12.0 | 9.8 | 4.6 | -1.4 | -8.1 | -11.9 | *-1.7* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

[[71]](#cite_note-71) The *Global Gender Gap Report 2006* ranked Sweden as the number one country in terms of [gender equality](/wiki/Gender_equality).[[107]](#cite_note-107) Some Swedish political figures have become known worldwide, among these are: Raoul Wallenberg, [Folke Bernadotte](/wiki/Folke_Bernadotte), the former [Secretary-General](/wiki/Secretary-General_of_the_United_Nations) of the United Nations [Dag Hammarskjöld](/wiki/Dag_Hammarskjöld), the former Prime Minister [Olof Palme](/wiki/Olof_Palme), the former Prime Minister and later [Foreign minister](/wiki/Foreign_minister) [Carl Bildt](/wiki/Carl_Bildt), the former President of the [General Assembly of the United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations_General_Assembly) [Jan Eliasson](/wiki/Jan_Eliasson), and the former [International Atomic Energy Agency](/wiki/International_Atomic_Energy_Agency) Iraq inspector [Hans Blix](/wiki/Hans_Blix).

### Judicial system[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The courts are divided into two parallel and separate systems: The general courts ([Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang)) for criminal and civil cases, and general administrative courts ([Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang)) for cases relating to disputes between private persons and the authorities.[[108]](#cite_note-108) Each of these systems has three tiers, where the top tier court of the respective system typically only will hear cases that may become [precedent](/wiki/Precedent). There are also a number of special courts, which will hear a narrower set of cases, as set down by legislation. While independent in their rulings, some of these courts are operated as divisions within courts of the general or general administrative courts.

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Hogsta_domstolen_Stockholm.jpg)[Bonde Palace](/wiki/Bonde_Palace) in Stockholm, seat of the [Supreme Court of Sweden](/wiki/Supreme_Court_of_Sweden) The [Supreme Court of Sweden](/wiki/Supreme_Court_of_Sweden) ([Template:Lang-sv](/wiki/Template:Lang-sv)) is the third and final instance in all civil and criminal cases in Sweden. Before a case can be decided by the Supreme Court, leave to appeal must be obtained, and with few exceptions, leave to appeal can be granted only when the case is of interest as a precedent. The Supreme Court consists of 16 Justices ([Template:Lang-sv](/wiki/Template:Lang-sv)), appointed by the Government, but the court as an institution is independent of the Riksdag, and the Government is not able to interfere with the decisions of the court.

According to a victimisation survey of 1,201 residents in 2005, Sweden has above-average [crime rates](/wiki/Crime_rate) compared to other EU countries. Sweden has high or above-average levels of assaults, sexual assaults, hate crimes, and consumer fraud. Sweden has low levels of burglary, car theft and drug problems. Bribe seeking is rare.[[109]](#cite_note-109) A mid-November 2013 news report announced that four prisons in Sweden were closed during the year due to a significant drop in the number of inmates. The decrease in the number of Swedish prisoners was considered "out-of-the-ordinary" by the head of Sweden's prison and probation services, with prison numbers in Sweden falling by around 1% a year since 2004. Prisons were closed in the towns of Åby, Håja, Båtshagen, and Kristianstad.[[110]](#cite_note-110)

### Foreign relations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [|thumb| The EU parliament in Brussels. Sweden is one of 28 member states of the European Union.](/wiki/File:European-parliament-brussels-inside.JPG)

Throughout the 20th century, [Swedish foreign policy](/wiki/Swedish_foreign_policy) was based on the principle of non-alignment in peacetime and [neutrality](/wiki/Neutral_country) in wartime. Sweden's government pursued an independent course of nonalignment in times of peace so that neutrality would be possible in the event of war.[[47]](#cite_note-47) Sweden's doctrine of neutrality is often traced back to the 19th century as the country has not been in a [state of war](/wiki/War) since the end of the [Swedish campaign against Norway](/wiki/Swedish_campaign_against_Norway_(1814)) in 1814. During World War II Sweden joined neither the [allied](/wiki/Allies_of_World_War_II) nor [axis](/wiki/Axis_powers) powers. This has sometimes been disputed since in effect Sweden allowed in select cases the Nazi regime to use its railroad system to transport troops and goods,[[42]](#cite_note-42)[[44]](#cite_note-44) especially iron ore from mines in northern Sweden, which was vital to the German war machine.[[44]](#cite_note-44)[[111]](#cite_note-111) However, Sweden also indirectly contributed to the defence of Finland in the Winter War, and permitted the training of Norwegian and Danish troops in Sweden after 1943.

[thumb|left|](/wiki/File:ODA_percent_of_GNI_2009.png)[Development aid](/wiki/Official_development_assistance) measured in [GNI](/wiki/Gross_national_income) in 2009. Source: OECD. As a percentage Sweden is the largest donor.

During the early [Cold War](/wiki/Cold_War) era, Sweden combined its policy of non-alignment and a low profile in international affairs with a [security policy](/wiki/Security_policy) based on strong [national defence](/wiki/National_security).[[112]](#cite_note-112) The function of the Swedish military was to deter attack.[[113]](#cite_note-113) At the same time, the country maintained relatively close informal connections with the Western bloc, especially in the realm of intelligence exchange. In 1952, a Swedish [DC-3](/wiki/DC-3) was [shot down](/wiki/Catalina_affair) over the Baltic Sea by a Soviet [MiG-15](/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-15) [jet](/wiki/Jet_aircraft) [fighter](/wiki/Fighter_aircraft). Later investigations revealed that the plane was actually gathering information for NATO.[[114]](#cite_note-114) Another plane, a [Catalina](/wiki/PBY_Catalina) [search and rescue](/wiki/Search_and_rescue) plane, was sent out a few days later and shot down by the Soviets as well. Prime Minister Olof Palme made an official visit to [Cuba](/wiki/Cuba) during the 1970s, during which he denounced [Fulgencio Batista's](/wiki/Fulgencio_Batista) government and praised contemporary [Cuban](/wiki/26_July_Movement) and [Cambodian](/wiki/Khmer_Rouge) revolutionaries in a speech.

Beginning in the late 1960s, Sweden attempted to play a more significant and independent role in international relations. It involved itself significantly in international peace efforts, especially through the United Nations, and in support to the [Third World](/wiki/Third_World).

On 27[Template:NbspOctober](/wiki/Template:Nbsp) 1981, a [Whiskey-class submarine](/wiki/Whiskey-class_submarine) ([*U 137*](/wiki/Soviet_submarine_S-363)) from the [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union) ran aground close to the [naval base](/wiki/Karlskrona_naval_base) at [Karlskrona](/wiki/Karlskrona) in the southern part of the country. Research has never clearly established whether the submarine ended up on the shoals through a navigational mistake or if an enemy committed espionage against Swedish military potential. The incident triggered a diplomatic crisis between Sweden and the Soviet Union. The [1986 assassination of Olof Palme](/wiki/Assassination_of_Olof_Palme) and with the end of the Cold War, Sweden has adopted a more traditional foreign policy approach. Nevertheless, the country remains active in peace keeping missions and maintains a considerable foreign aid budget.

Since 1995 Sweden has been a member of the European Union, and as a consequence of a new world security situation the country's foreign policy doctrine has been partly modified, with Sweden playing a more active role in European security co-operation.

### Military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Swedish_JAS-39_Gripen_landing.jpg) [JAS 39 Gripen](/wiki/JAS_39_Gripen) is an advanced Swedish multi-role [fighter aircraft](/wiki/Fighter_aircraft) of the [Swedish Air Force](/wiki/Swedish_Air_Force). The [law is enforced in Sweden](/wiki/Law_enforcement_in_Sweden) by several government entities. The Swedish police is a [Government agency](/wiki/Government_agencies_in_Sweden) concerned with police matters. The [National Task Force](/wiki/National_Task_Force) is a national [SWAT](/wiki/SWAT) unit within the Police Service. The [Swedish Security Service's](/wiki/Swedish_Security_Service) responsibilities are [counter-espionage](/wiki/Counter-espionage), anti-terrorist activities, protection of the constitution and protection of sensitive objects and people.

*Försvarsmakten* (Swedish Armed Forces) is a government agency reporting to the Swedish [Ministry of Defence](/wiki/Ministry_of_Defence_(Sweden)) and responsible for the [peacetime](/wiki/Peacetime) operation of the armed forces of Sweden. The primary task of the agency is to train and deploy peace support forces abroad, while maintaining the long-term ability to refocus on the defence of Sweden in the event of war. The armed forces are divided into [Army](/wiki/Swedish_Army), [Air Force](/wiki/Swedish_Air_Force) and [Navy](/wiki/Swedish_Navy). The head of the armed forces is the [Supreme Commander](/wiki/Supreme_Commander_of_the_Swedish_Armed_Forces) (*Överbefälhavaren*, ÖB), the most senior commissioned officer in the country. Up to 1974 the King was *pro forma* [Commander-in-Chief](/wiki/Commander_in_chief#Sweden), but in reality it was clearly understood all through the 20th century that the Monarch would have no *active* role as a military leader.

[thumb|The Infantry fighting vehicle](/wiki/File:Swedish_CV9040.JPG) [CV90](/wiki/Combat_Vehicle_90), which is produced and used by Sweden. Until the end of the Cold War, nearly all males reaching the age of [military service](/wiki/Military_service) were [conscripted](/wiki/Conscription). In recent years, the number of conscripted males has shrunk dramatically, while the number of female volunteers has increased slightly. Recruitment has generally shifted towards finding the most motivated recruits, rather than solely those otherwise most fit for service. All soldiers serving abroad must by law be volunteers. In 1975 the total number of conscripts was 45,000. By 2003 it was down to 15,000.

On 1[Template:NbspJuly](/wiki/Template:Nbsp) 2010 Sweden stopped routine conscription, switching to an all volunteer force unless otherwise required for defence readiness.[[115]](#cite_note-115)[[116]](#cite_note-116)[[117]](#cite_note-117) The need to recruit only the soldiers later prepared to volunteer for international service will be emphasised. The total forces gathered would consist of about 60,000 men. This could be compared with the 1980s before the fall of the Soviet Union, when Sweden could gather up to 1,000,000 men.

Swedish units have taken part in peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cyprus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Liberia, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Chad.

Currently, one of the most important tasks for the Swedish Armed Forces has been to form a Swedish-led [EU Battle Group](/wiki/European_Union_Battlegroups) to which Norway, Finland, Ireland and Estonia will also contribute.[[118]](#cite_note-118) The [Nordic Battle Group](/wiki/Nordic_Battle_Group) (NBG) had a 10-day deployment readiness during the first half of 2008 and, although Swedish-led, had its Operational Headquarters (OHQ) in [Northwood](/wiki/Northwood,_London), outside London.

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Sweden_GRP_per_Capita2004.svg)[Gross Regional Product](/wiki/Gross_Regional_Product) (GRP) per capita in thousands of kronor (2004). [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Nordstan_Öst.JPG)[Nordstan](/wiki/Nordstan) is one of the largest shopping malls in northern Europe Sweden is the seventh-richest country in the world in terms of GDP (gross domestic product) per capita and a high standard of living is experienced by its citizens. Sweden is an export-oriented [mixed economy](/wiki/Mixed_economy). Timber, [hydropower](/wiki/Hydropower) and iron ore constitute the resource base of an economy with a heavy emphasis on [foreign trade](/wiki/Foreign_trade). Sweden's engineering sector accounts for 50% of output and exports, while telecommunications, the automotive industry and the pharmaceutical industries are also of great importance. Sweden is the ninth-largest [arms exporter in the world](/wiki/Arms_industry). Agriculture accounts for 2% of GDP and employment. The country ranks among the highest for telephone and Internet access penetration.[[119]](#cite_note-119) In 2010 Sweden's income [Gini coefficient](/wiki/Gini_coefficient) was the third lowest among developed countries, at 0.25—slightly higher than Japan and Denmark—suggesting [Sweden had low income inequality](/wiki/Income_inequality_in_Sweden). However, Sweden's wealth Gini coefficient at 0.853 was the second highest in developed countries, and above European and North American averages, suggesting high wealth inequality.<ref name=hdr2010>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref><ref name=cs2010>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Even on a disposable income basis, the geographical distribution of Gini coefficient of income inequality varies within different regions and municipalities of Sweden. [Danderyd](/wiki/Danderyd_Municipality), outside Stockholm, has Sweden's highest Gini coefficient of income inequality, at 0.55, while [Hofors](/wiki/Hofors_Municipality) near Gävle has the lowest at 0.25. In and around Stockholm and Scania, two of the more densely populated regions of Sweden, the income Gini coefficient is between 0.35 and 0.55.[[120]](#cite_note-120) In terms of structure, the Swedish economy is characterised by a large, knowledge-intensive and export-oriented manufacturing sector; an increasing, but comparatively small, business [service sector](/wiki/Service_sector); and by international standards, a large public service sector. Large organisations, both in manufacturing and services, dominate the [Swedish economy](/wiki/Swedish_economy).[[121]](#cite_note-121) High and medium-high technology manufacturing accounts for 9.9% of GDP.[[122]](#cite_note-122) The 20 largest (by turnover) registered Swedish companies in 2007 were [Volvo](/wiki/Volvo), [Ericsson](/wiki/Ericsson), [Vattenfall](/wiki/Vattenfall), [Skanska](/wiki/Skanska), [Sony Ericsson Mobile Communications AB](/wiki/Sony_Ericsson_Mobile_Communications_AB), [Svenska Cellulosa Aktiebolaget](/wiki/Svenska_Cellulosa_Aktiebolaget), [Electrolux](/wiki/Electrolux), [Volvo Personvagnar](/wiki/Volvo_Personvagnar), [TeliaSonera](/wiki/TeliaSonera), [Sandvik](/wiki/Sandvik), [Scania](/wiki/Scania_AB), [ICA](/wiki/ICA_AB), [Hennes & Mauritz](/wiki/Hennes_&_Mauritz), [IKEA](/wiki/IKEA), [Nordea](/wiki/Nordea), [Preem](/wiki/Preem), [Atlas Copco](/wiki/Atlas_Copco), [Securitas](/wiki/Securitas_AB), [Nordstjernan](/wiki/Nordstjernan) and [SKF](/wiki/SKF).[[123]](#cite_note-123) The vast majority of Sweden's industry is [privately](/wiki/Private_sector) controlled, unlike many other industrialised Western countries, and, in accordance with a historical standard, publicly owned enterprises are of minor importance.

[thumb|left|Real GDP growth in Sweden, 1996–2006.](/wiki/File:Sw_real_gdp_growth.svg)

An estimated 4.5 million Swedish residents are employed and around a third of the workforce completed tertiary education. In terms of [GDP per-hour-worked](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)_per_hour_worked), Sweden was the world's ninth highest in 2006 at US$31, compared to US$22 in Spain and US$35 in the United States.[[124]](#cite_note-124) GDP per-hour-worked is growing 2.5% per year for the economy as a whole and the trade-terms-balanced productivity growth is 2%.[[124]](#cite_note-124) According to the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](/wiki/Organisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development) (OECD), deregulation, globalisation, and technology sector growth have been key productivity drivers.[[124]](#cite_note-124) Sweden is a world leader in privatised pensions and pension funding problems are relatively small compared to many other Western European countries.[[125]](#cite_note-125) A pilot program to test the feasibility of a six-hour workday, without loss of pay, will commence in 2014, involving the participation of Gothenburg municipal staff. The Swedish government is seeking to reduce its costs through decreased sick leave hours and increased efficiency.[[126]](#cite_note-126) [thumb|Sweden is part of the](/wiki/File:Euro_accession.svg) [Schengen Area](/wiki/Schengen_Area) and the EU single market. The typical worker receives 40% of his or her labour costs after the [tax wedge](/wiki/Tax_wedge). Total tax collected by Sweden as a percentage of its GDP peaked at 52.3% in 1990.[[127]](#cite_note-127) The country faced a real estate and banking crisis in 1990–1991, and consequently passed tax reforms in 1991 to implement tax rate cuts and tax base broadening over time.[[128]](#cite_note-128)[[129]](#cite_note-129) Since 1990, taxes as a percentage of GDP collected by Sweden has been dropping, with total tax rates for the highest income earners dropping the most.[[130]](#cite_note-130) In 2010 45.8% of the country's GDP was collected as taxes, the second highest among OECD countries, and nearly double the percentage in the US or South Korea.<ref name=oecdtax11>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Tax income-financed employment represents a third of the Swedish workforce, a substantially higher proportion than in most other countries. Overall, GDP growth has been fast since reforms—especially those in manufacturing—were enacted in the early 1990s.[[131]](#cite_note-131) Sweden is the fourth-most competitive economy in the world, according to the [World Economic Forum](/wiki/World_Economic_Forum) in its *Global Competitiveness Report 2012–2013*.[[8]](#cite_note-8) Sweden is the top performing country in the 2014 *Global Green Economy Index (GGEI)*.[[132]](#cite_note-132) Sweden is ranked fourth in the IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook 2013.[[133]](#cite_note-133) According to the book *The Flight of the Creative Class* by the US economist Professor [Richard Florida](/wiki/Richard_Florida) of the [University of Toronto](/wiki/University_of_Toronto), Sweden is ranked as having the best creativity in Europe for business and is predicted to become a talent magnet for the world's most purposeful workers. The book compiled an index to measure the kind of creativity it claims is most useful to business—talent, technology and tolerance.[[134]](#cite_note-134) Sweden maintains its own currency, the [Swedish krona](/wiki/Swedish_krona) (SEK), a result of the Swedes having rejected the [euro](/wiki/Euro) in a referendum. The Swedish [Riksbank](/wiki/Sveriges_Riksbank)—founded in 1668 and thus the oldest central bank in the world—is currently focusing on price stability with an inflation target of 2%. According to the *Economic Survey of Sweden 2007* by the OECD, the average inflation in Sweden has been one of the lowest among European countries since the mid-1990s, largely because of deregulation and quick utilisation of globalisation.[[124]](#cite_note-124) The largest trade flows are with Germany, the United States, Norway, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Finland.

Financial deregulation in the 1980s impacted adversely on the property market, leading to a bubble and eventually a crash in the early 1990s. Commercial property prices fell by up to two thirds, resulting in two Swedish banks having to be taken over by the government. In the following two decades the property sector strengthened. By 2014, legislators, economists and the IMF were again warning of a bubble with residential property prices soaring and the level of personal mortgage debt expanding. Household debt-to-income rose above 170% as the IMF was calling on legislators to consider zoning reform and other means of generating a greater supply of housing as demand was outstripping what was available, pushing prices higher. By August 2014, 40% of home borrowers had interest-only loans while those that didn't were repaying principal at a rate that would take 100 years to fully repay.[[135]](#cite_note-135)

### Energy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

[thumb|right|250px|](/wiki/File:Ringhals.JPG)[Ringhals Nuclear Power Plant](/wiki/Ringhals_Nuclear_Power_Plant), located south of [Gothenburg](/wiki/Gothenburg). Sweden's energy market is largely privatised. The [Nordic energy market](/wiki/Nordic_energy_market) is one of the first liberalised energy markets in Europe and it is traded in [NASDAQ OMX Commodities Europe](/wiki/NASDAQ_OMX_Commodities_Europe) and [Nord Pool Spot](/wiki/Nord_Pool_Spot). In 2006, out of a total electricity production of 139 [TWh](/wiki/TWh), electricity from hydropower accounted for 61 TWh (44%), and [nuclear power](/wiki/Nuclear_power) delivered 65 TWh (47%). At the same time, the use of [biofuels](/wiki/Biofuel), [peat](/wiki/Peat) etc. produced 13 TWh (9%) of electricity, while wind power produced 1 TWh (1%). Sweden was a net importer of electricity by a margin of 6 TWh.[[136]](#cite_note-136) [Biomass](/wiki/Biomass) is mainly used to produce heat for [district heating](/wiki/District_heating) and [central heating](/wiki/Central_heating) and industry processes.

The [1973 oil crisis](/wiki/1973_oil_crisis) strengthened Sweden's commitment to decrease dependence on imported fossil fuels. Since then, electricity has been generated mostly from hydropower and nuclear power. The use of nuclear power has been limited, however. Among other things, the accident of [Three Mile Island Nuclear Generating Station](/wiki/Three_Mile_Island_Nuclear_Generating_Station) (United States) prompted the Riksdag to ban new nuclear plants. In March 2005, an opinion poll showed that 83% supported maintaining or increasing nuclear power.[[137]](#cite_note-137) Politicians have made announcements about [oil phase-out in Sweden](/wiki/Oil_phase-out_in_Sweden), decrease of nuclear power, and multibillion-dollar investments in [renewable energy](/wiki/Renewable_energy) and energy efficiency.[[138]](#cite_note-138)[[139]](#cite_note-139) The country has for many years pursued a strategy of indirect taxation as an instrument of [environmental policy](/wiki/Environmental_policy), including [energy taxes](/wiki/Energy_tax) in general and [carbon dioxide](/wiki/Carbon_dioxide) taxes in particular.[[138]](#cite_note-138) Sweden was in 2014 a net exporter of electricity by a margin of 16 TWh, the production from windpower mills had increased to 11.5 TWh[[140]](#cite_note-140)

### Transport[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Öresundsbron_i_solnedgång_2.jpg) [Öresund Bridge](/wiki/Öresund_Bridge) between [Malmö](/wiki/Malmö) and [Copenhagen](/wiki/Copenhagen) in Denmark.

Sweden has [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of paved road and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of expressways. [Motorways](/wiki/List_of_motorways_in_Sweden) run through Sweden, Denmark and over the Øresund Bridge to Stockholm, Gothenburg, [Uppsala](/wiki/Uppsala) and [Uddevalla](/wiki/Uddevalla). The system of motorways is still under construction and a new motorway from Uppsala to [Gävle](/wiki/Gävle) was finished on 17 October 2007. Sweden had left-hand traffic (Vänstertrafik in Swedish) from approximately 1736 and continued to do so well into the 20th century. Voters rejected right-hand traffic in 1955, but after the Riksdag passed legislation in 1963 changeover took place in 1967, known in Swedish as [Dagen H](/wiki/Dagen_H).

The [Stockholm metro](/wiki/Stockholm_metro) is the only subway system in Sweden and serves the city of Stockholm via 100 stations. The rail transport market is privatised, but while there are many privately owned enterprises, many operators are still owned by state. The counties have financing, ticket and marketing responsibility for local trains. For other trains the operators handle tickets and marketing themselves. Operators include [SJ](/wiki/SJ_AB), [Veolia Transport](/wiki/Veolia_Transport), [DSB](/wiki/DSB_(railway_company)), [Green Cargo](/wiki/Green_Cargo), [Tågkompaniet](/wiki/Tågkompaniet) and [Inlandsbanan](/wiki/Inlandsbanan). Most of the railways are owned and operated by [Trafikverket](/wiki/Trafikverket). Most tram nets were closed in 1967, as Sweden changed from left-side to right-side driving, but they survived in [Norrköping](/wiki/Norrköping) and Gothenburg.

[thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Hall,_Stockholm_Central_Station.jpg)[Stockholm Central Station](/wiki/Stockholm_Central_Station)

The largest airports include [Stockholm–Arlanda Airport](/wiki/Stockholm–Arlanda_Airport) (16.1 million passengers in 2009) [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) north of Stockholm, [Göteborg–Landvetter Airport](/wiki/Göteborg–Landvetter_Airport) (4.3 million passengers in 2008), and [Stockholm–Skavsta Airport](/wiki/Stockholm–Skavsta_Airport) (2.0 million passengers). Sweden hosts the two largest port companies in Scandinavia, [Port of Göteborg AB](/wiki/Port_of_Gothenburg) (Gothenburg) and the transnational company [Copenhagen Malmö Port AB](/wiki/Copenhagen_Malmö_Port). The most used airport for a large part of Southern Sweden is [Kastrup or Copenhagen Airport](/wiki/Copenhagen_Airport) which is located only 12 minutes by train from the closest Swedish railway station, [Hyllie](/wiki/Hyllie_railway_station). Copenhagen Airport also is the largest *international* airport in Scandinavia and Finland.

Sweden has also car ferry connections to several neighbouring countries. For instance to Finland from both the Stockholm area across [Sea of Åland](/wiki/Sea_of_Åland) to [Turku](/wiki/Turku),[[141]](#cite_note-141) [Mariehamn](/wiki/Mariehamn)[[142]](#cite_note-142) and [Helsinki](/wiki/Helsinki)[[143]](#cite_note-143) and from [Umeå](/wiki/Umeå) across [Kvarken](/wiki/Kvarken) to [Vaasa](/wiki/Vaasa),[[144]](#cite_note-144) Estonia across the Baltic Sea,[[145]](#cite_note-145) Latvia[[146]](#cite_note-146) and to Poland also across the Baltic Sea both between [Karlskrona](/wiki/Karlskrona) and [Gdynia](/wiki/Gdynia)[[147]](#cite_note-147) as well as and from both Ystad and [Trelleborg](/wiki/Trelleborg) to [Świnoujście](/wiki/Świnoujście).[[148]](#cite_note-148)[[149]](#cite_note-149) The most importaint ferry routes from Sweden is however the routes to Denmark and Germany. From Trelleborg goes three different routes with four lines to Germany. The Trelleborg – [Sassnitz](/wiki/Sassnitz) line started as a steam ferry route for trains in the 19th Century, and today's ferries still carries the trains of the [Malmö](/wiki/Malmö) to [Berlin](/wiki/Berlin) line during the summer.[[150]](#cite_note-150) The route Trelleborg to [Rostock](/wiki/Rostock) is served by two shipping lines.[[151]](#cite_note-151)[[152]](#cite_note-152) The Trelleborg harbour is the most busy in Sweden when it comes to number of transpored weight with lorries[[153]](#cite_note-153) Ferries to [Travemünde](/wiki/Travemünde) also departures from Trelleborg [[154]](#cite_note-154) but also from Malmö.[[155]](#cite_note-155) The latter line doesn't just cross the Baltic Sea, but also the southern part of [Øresund](/wiki/Øresund). To Germany also typical long "Lorries only (or mainly)" sails between [Nynäshamn](/wiki/Nynäshamn) and [Gdańsk](/wiki/Gdańsk)[[156]](#cite_note-156) as well as between Gothenburg and [Kiel](/wiki/Kiel),[[157]](#cite_note-157) the route goes across [Kattegat](/wiki/Kattegat) and the Danish strait [Great Belt](/wiki/Great_Belt). From Gothenburg ferries also departure to [Frederikshavn](/wiki/Frederikshavn) and the Danish peninsula [Jutland](/wiki/Jutland), by crossing the [Kattegat](/wiki/Kattegat).[[158]](#cite_note-158) Despite the opening of the fixed link to Denmark, known as the [Øresund Bridge](/wiki/Øresund_Bridge), the busiest ferry route from any Swedish is still the [HH Ferry route](/wiki/HH_Ferry_route) between [Helsingborg](/wiki/Helsingborg) and [Helsingør](/wiki/Helsingør) where ferries departures more than seventy times in each direction every day.[[159]](#cite_note-159) During daytime a ferry departs every 15 minutes. Ferries have previously also sailed to the [United Kingdom](/wiki/United_Kingdom) from Gothenburg. (British destinations have been Immingham, Harwich and Newcastle.)

Sweden has two domestic ferry lines with large vessels, both connecting Gotland with the mainland. The lines leave from Visby harbour on the island, and the ferries sail to either [Oskarshamn](/wiki/Oskarshamn) or Nynäshamn.[[160]](#cite_note-160) A smaller car ferry connects the island of [Ven](/wiki/Ven_(Sweden)) in Øresund with [Landskrona](/wiki/Landskrona).[[161]](#cite_note-161)

### Public policy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) Sweden has one of the most highly developed welfare states in the world. According to a 2012 OECD report, the country had the second-highest public social spending as a percentage of its GDP after France (27.3% and 28.4%, respectively), and the third-highest total (public and private) social spending at 30.2% of its GDP, after France and [Belgium](/wiki/Belgium) (31.3% and 31.0%, respectively).[[162]](#cite_note-162) Sweden spent 6.3% of its GDP, the 9th-highest among 34 OECD countries, to provide equal access to education.[[163]](#cite_note-163) On health care, the country spent 10.0% of its total GDP, the 12th highest.[[164]](#cite_note-164) Historically, Sweden provided solid support for [free trade](/wiki/Free_trade) (except agriculture) and mostly relatively strong and stable property rights (both private and public), though some economists have pointed out that Sweden promoted industries with tariffs and used publicly subsidised R&D during the country's early critical years of industrialisation.[[165]](#cite_note-165) After World War II a succession of governments expanded the welfare state by raising the taxes. During this period Sweden's economic growth was also one of the highest in the industrial world. A series of successive social reforms transformed the country into one of the most equal and developed on earth. The consistent growth of the welfare state led to Swedes achieving unprecedented levels of social mobility and quality of life—to this day Sweden consistently ranks at the top of league tables for health, literacy and Human Development—far ahead of some wealthier countries (for example the United States).[[166]](#cite_note-166) However, from the 1970s and onwards Sweden's GDP growth fell behind other industrialised countries and the country's per capita ranking fell from 4th to 14th place in a few decades.[[167]](#cite_note-167) From the mid-1990s until today Sweden's economic growth has once again accelerated and has been higher than in most other industrialised countries (including the US) during the last 15 years.[[168]](#cite_note-168) A report from the [United Nations Development Program](/wiki/United_Nations_Development_Program) predicted that Sweden's rating on the [Human Development Index](/wiki/Human_Development_Index) will fall from 0.949 in 2010 to 0.906 in 2030.[[169]](#cite_note-169) Sweden began slowing the expansion of the welfare state in the 1980s, and even trimming it back, and according to the OECD and [McKinsey](/wiki/McKinsey_&_Company), Sweden has recently been relatively quick to adopt economic liberalisation policies, such as deregulation, compared to countries such as France.[[124]](#cite_note-124)[[170]](#cite_note-170) The current Swedish government is continuing the trend of moderate rollbacks of previous social reforms.[[124]](#cite_note-124)[[171]](#cite_note-171) Growth has been higher than in many other [EU-15](/wiki/EU-15) countries. Also since the mid-1980s, Sweden has had the fastest growth in inequality of any developed nation, according to the [OECD](/wiki/Organization_for_Economic_Cooperation_and_Development). This has largely been attributed to the reduction in state benefits and a shift toward the [privatisation](/wiki/Privatisation) of public services. According to Barbro Sorman, an activist of the opposition Left Party, "The rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer. Sweden is starting to look like the USA." Nevertheless, it remains far more egalitarian than most nations.[[59]](#cite_note-59)[[172]](#cite_note-172) Partly as a result of these privatisations and widening economic disparity, the Swedes in the 2014 elections put the Social Democrats back in power.[[173]](#cite_note-173)[[174]](#cite_note-174) Sweden adopted free market agricultural policies in 1990. Since the 1930s, the agricultural sector had been subject to price controls. In June 1990, the Riksdag voted for a new agricultural policy marking a significant shift away from price controls. As a result, food prices fell somewhat. However, the liberalisations soon became moot because EU agricultural controls supervened.[[175]](#cite_note-175) Since the late 1960s, Sweden has had the highest tax quota (as percentage of GDP) in the industrialised world, although today the gap has narrowed and Denmark has surpassed Sweden as the most heavily taxed country among developed countries. Sweden has a two-step [progressive tax](/wiki/Progressive_tax) scale with a municipal income tax of about 30% and an additional high-income state tax of 20–25% when a salary exceeds roughly 320,000 SEK per year. [Payroll taxes](/wiki/Payroll_tax) amount to 32%. In addition, a national [VAT](/wiki/Value_added_tax) of 25% is added to many things bought by private citizens, with the exception of food (12% VAT), transportation, and books (6% VAT). Certain items are subject to additional taxes, e.g. electricity, petrol/diesel and alcoholic beverages.

[Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), total tax revenue was 47.8% of GDP, the second-highest tax burden among developed countries, down from 49.1% 2006.[[176]](#cite_note-176) Sweden's inverted tax wedge – the amount going to the service worker's wallet – is approximately 15%, compared to 10% in Belgium, 30% in Ireland, and 50% in United States.[[167]](#cite_note-167) Public sector spending amounts to 53% of the GDP. State and municipal employees total around a third of the workforce, much more than in most Western countries. Only Denmark has a larger public sector (38% of Danish workforce). Spending on transfers is also high.

Seventy per cent of the employed workers is organised in trade unions. Union density in 2012 was 67% among blue-collar-workers (most of them in the [Swedish Trade Union Confederation](/wiki/Swedish_Trade_Union_Confederation), LO) and 73% among white-collar workers (most of them in the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees, TCO, and the [Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations](/wiki/Swedish_Confederation_of_Professional_Associations), SACO).[[177]](#cite_note-177) Trade unions have the right to elect two representatives to the board in all Swedish companies with more than 25 employees. Sweden has a relatively high amount of sick leave per worker in OECD: the average worker loses 24 days due to sickness.[[131]](#cite_note-131) In December 2008, the number employed in the 16–64 age group was 75.0%. The employment tendency was very strong in 2007. The positive trend continued during the first half of 2008, but the rate of increase slackened. According to [Statistics Sweden](/wiki/Statistics_Sweden), the unemployment rate in June 2012 was at 8.8%.[[178]](#cite_note-178) Unemployment among youth (aged 24 or younger) in 2012 was 24.2%, making Sweden the [OECD](/wiki/Organisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development#Member_countries) country with the highest ratio of youth unemployment versus unemployment in general.[[179]](#cite_note-179)

### Science and technology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:AlfredNobel_adjusted.jpg)[Alfred Nobel](/wiki/Alfred_Nobel), inventor of dynamite and institutor of the Nobel Prize.

In the 18th century Sweden's [scientific revolution](/wiki/Scientific_revolution) took off. Previously, technical progress had mainly come from mainland Europe.

In 1739, the [Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences](/wiki/Royal_Swedish_Academy_of_Sciences) was founded, with people such as [Carl Linnaeus](/wiki/Carl_Linnaeus) and [Anders Celsius](/wiki/Anders_Celsius) as early members. Many of the companies founded by early pioneers still remain major international brands. [Gustaf Dalén](/wiki/Gustaf_Dalén) founded [AGA](/wiki/AGA_AB), and received the Nobel Prize for his [sun valve](/wiki/Sun_valve). [Alfred Nobel](/wiki/Alfred_Nobel) invented [dynamite](/wiki/Dynamite) and instituted the Nobel Prizes. [Lars Magnus Ericsson](/wiki/Lars_Magnus_Ericsson) started the company bearing his name, Ericsson, still one of the largest telecom companies in the world. [Jonas Wenström](/wiki/Jonas_Wenström) was an early pioneer in [alternating current](/wiki/Alternating_current) and is along with [Serbian](/wiki/Serbia) inventor [Nikola Tesla](/wiki/Nikola_Tesla) credited as one of the inventors of the three-phase electrical system.[[180]](#cite_note-180) The traditional engineering industry is still a major source of Swedish inventions, but pharmaceuticals, electronics and other high-tech industries are gaining ground. [Tetra Pak](/wiki/Tetra_Pak) was an invention for storing liquid foods, invented by [Erik Wallenberg](/wiki/Erik_Wallenberg). [Losec](/wiki/Losec), an ulcer medicine, was the world's best-selling drug in the 1990s and was developed by [AstraZeneca](/wiki/AstraZeneca). More recently [Håkan Lans](/wiki/Håkan_Lans) invented the [Automatic Identification System](/wiki/Automatic_Identification_System), a worldwide standard for shipping and civil aviation navigation. A large portion of the Swedish economy is to this day based on the export of technical inventions, and many large multinational corporations from Sweden have their origins in the ingenuity of Swedish inventors.[[180]](#cite_note-180) Swedish inventors held 47,112 patents in the United States [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), according to the [United States Patent and Trademark Office](/wiki/United_States_Patent_and_Trademark_Office). As a nation, only ten other countries hold more patents than Sweden.[[181]](#cite_note-181) Combined, the public and the private sector in Sweden allocate over 3.5% of GDP to [research & development](/wiki/Research_&_development) (R&D) per year, making Sweden's investment in R&D as a percentage of GDP the second-highest in the world.[[182]](#cite_note-182) For several decades the [Swedish government](/wiki/Swedish_government) has prioritised scientific and R&D activities. As a percentage of GDP, the Swedish government spends the most of any nation on research and development.[[183]](#cite_note-183) Sweden tops other European countries in the number of published scientific works per capita.[[184]](#cite_note-184) [600px|thumb|center|Swedish–](/wiki/File:Swedish-ESO_Submillimetre_Telescope_The_Sentinel.jpg)[ESO](/wiki/European_Southern_Observatory) Submillimetre Telescope discovered the [Boomerang Nebula](/wiki/Boomerang_Nebula) and the first extragalactic [silicon monoxide maser](/wiki/Astrophysical_maser).[[185]](#cite_note-185)

In 2009, the decisions to construct Sweden's two largest scientific installations, the synchrotron radiation facility [MAX IV](/wiki/MAX_IV) and the European Spallation Source, were taken.[[186]](#cite_note-186)[[187]](#cite_note-187) Both installations will be built in [Lund](/wiki/Lund). The [European Spallation Source](/wiki/European_Spallation_Source), costing some SEK 14 billion to construct,[[188]](#cite_note-188) will be operational in 2019 and will give an approximately 30 times stronger neutron beam than any of today's existing neutron source installations.[[189]](#cite_note-189) The MAX IV, costing some SEK 3 billion, will be operational in 2015. Both facilities have strong implications on material research.

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The total population of Sweden was estimated to be 9,845,155 on 30 November 2015.[[1]](#cite_note-1) The population exceeded 9 million for the first time on approximately 12 August 2004 and 9.5 million in the spring of 2012, according to Statistics Sweden.[[190]](#cite_note-190)[[191]](#cite_note-191) The population density is 20.6 people per km² (53.3 per square mile) and it is substantially higher in the south than in the north. About 85% of the population live in urban areas.[[2]](#cite_note-2) The capital city Stockholm has a municipality population of about 900,000 (with 1.3 million in the urban area and 2 million in the metropolitan area). The second- and third-largest cities are Gothenburg and Malmö. Greater Gothenburg counts close to a million inhabitants and the same goes for the Western part of Scania, around the Øresund. Together with Greater Copenhagen, the entire population around the Öresund counts close to 3 million at a land area of less than 6000 km2. An other area with notably higher population density compared to the general Swedish, is the agricultural part of Östergötland. Also the western coast is fairly well populated even outside Scania and Greater Gothenburg. So is also the area around Lake Mälaren even outside Greater Stockholm and the agricultural area around Uppsala.

While Norrland (which cover approximately 60% of the Swedish territory) has a very low population density (below 5 people per km2). The mountains and most of the coast remotely areas are next to unpopulated. Low population density exists also in large parts of western Svealand, as well as southern and central Småland. An area known as *Finnveden*, which is located in the south-west of Småland, and mainly *below* the 57th latitude, can also be considered as next to empty of people.

Between 1820 and 1930, approximately 1.3 million Swedes, a third of the country's population, [emigrated to North America](/wiki/Swedish_emigration_to_North_America), and most of them to the United States. There are more than 4.4 million [Swedish Americans](/wiki/Swedish_American) according to a 2006 US Census Bureau estimate.[[192]](#cite_note-192) In Canada, the community of [Swedish ancestry](/wiki/Swedish_Canadian) is 330,000 strong.[[193]](#cite_note-193) There are no official statistics on ethnicity, but according to Statistics Sweden around 1,921,000 (20.1%) inhabitants of Sweden were of a [foreign background](/wiki/Immigration_to_Sweden) in 2012, defined as being born abroad or born in Sweden to two parents born abroad.[[194]](#cite_note-194)[[195]](#cite_note-195) With the same definition, the most common countries of origin were Finland (2.38%), former Yugoslavia or its successing states (2.06%), Iraq (1.74%), Poland (0.91%) and Iran (0.84%).[[196]](#cite_note-196)[Template:Largest cities of Sweden](/wiki/Template:Largest_cities_of_Sweden)

### Language[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|left|Distribution of speakers of the Swedish language](/wiki/File:Distribution-sv.png) The official language of Sweden is Swedish,[[197]](#cite_note-197)[[198]](#cite_note-198) a North Germanic language, related and very similar to [Danish](/wiki/Danish_language) and [Norwegian](/wiki/Norwegian_language), but differing in pronunciation and [orthography](/wiki/Orthography). Norwegians have little difficulty understanding Swedish, and Danes can also understand it, with slightly more difficulty than the Norwegians. The same goes for standard Swedish speakers, who find it far easier to understand Norwegian than Danish. The [dialects spoken in Scania](/wiki/Scanian_dialects), the southernmost part of the country, are influenced by Danish because [the region traditionally was a part of Denmark](/wiki/Skåneland) and is nowadays situated closely to it. [Sweden Finns](/wiki/Sweden_Finns) are Sweden's largest linguistic minority, comprising about 5% of Sweden's population,[[199]](#cite_note-199) and Finnish is recognised as a minority language.[[198]](#cite_note-198) With a large influx of native speakers of [Arabic](/wiki/Arabic_language) in latter years, the prevalence of native Arab speakers is likely more widespread than actual usage of Finnish. The actual number is unknown, since no official statistics are kept.[[200]](#cite_note-200) Along with Finnish, [four other minority languages](/wiki/Minority_languages_of_Sweden) are also recognised: [Meänkieli](/wiki/Meänkieli), [Sami](/wiki/Sami_languages), [Romani](/wiki/Romany_language) and [Yiddish](/wiki/Yiddish_language). Swedish became Sweden's official language on 1 July 2009, when a new language law was implemented.[[198]](#cite_note-198) The issue of whether Swedish should be declared the official language has been raised in the past, and the Riksdag voted on the matter in 2005, but the proposal narrowly failed.[[201]](#cite_note-201) In varying degrees, depending largely on frequency of interaction with English, a majority of Swedes, especially those born after World War II, understand and speak English owing to trade links, the popularity of overseas travel, a strong Anglo-American influence and the tradition of [subtitling](/wiki/Subtitle_(captioning)) rather than dubbing foreign television shows and films, and the [relative similarity](/wiki/Germanic_languages) of the two languages which makes learning English easier. In a 2005 survey by [Eurobarometer](/wiki/Eurobarometer), 89% of Swedes reported the ability to speak English.[[202]](#cite_note-202) English became a compulsory subject for secondary school students studying [natural sciences](/wiki/Natural_science) as early as 1849, and has been a compulsory subject for all Swedish students since the late 1940s.[[203]](#cite_note-203) Depending on the local school authorities, English is currently a compulsory subject between [first grade](/wiki/First_grade) and [ninth grade](/wiki/Ninth_grade), with all students continuing in secondary school studying English for at least another year. Most students also study one and sometimes two additional languages. These include (but are not limited to) German, French and Spanish. Some Danish and Norwegian is at times also taught as part of Swedish courses for native speakers. Because of the extensive [mutual intelligibility](/wiki/Mutual_intelligibility) between the three continental [Scandinavian languages](/wiki/Scandinavian_language) Swedish speakers often use their native language when visiting or living in Norway or Denmark.

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Before the 11th century, Swedes adhered to [Norse paganism](/wiki/Norse_paganism), worshiping [Æsir](/wiki/Æsir) gods, with its centre at the [Temple in Uppsala](/wiki/Temple_at_Uppsala). With [Christianisation](/wiki/Christianisation) in the 11th century, the laws of the country were changed, forbidding worship of other deities into the late 19th century. After the Protestant Reformation in the 1530s, a change led by [Martin Luther's](/wiki/Martin_Luther) Swedish associate [Olaus Petri](/wiki/Olaus_Petri), the authority of the Roman Catholic Church was abolished. The church and state were separated, allowing [Lutheranism](/wiki/Lutheranism) to prevail. This process was completed by the [Uppsala Synod](/wiki/Uppsala_Synod) of 1593. Lutheranism became Sweden's official religion. During the era following the Reformation, usually known as the period of [Lutheran orthodoxy](/wiki/Lutheran_orthodoxy), small groups of non-Lutherans, especially [Calvinist](/wiki/Calvinism) [Dutchmen](/wiki/Dutch_people), the [Moravian Church](/wiki/Moravian_Church) and [Walloons](/wiki/Walloons) or [French Huguenots](/wiki/French_Huguenots) from Belgium, played a significant role in trade and industry, and were quietly tolerated as long as they kept a low religious profile. The [Sami](/wiki/Sami_people) originally had their own shamanistic religion, but they converted to Lutheranism by the work of Swedish missionaries in the 17th and 18th centuries. [thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Uppsala_Cathedral.JPG)[Uppsala Cathedral](/wiki/Uppsala_Cathedral).

With religious liberalisations in the late 18th century believers of other faiths, including [Judaism](/wiki/Judaism) and Roman Catholicism, were allowed to openly live and work in the country. However, until 1860 it remained illegal for Lutheran Swedes to convert to another religion. The 19th century saw the arrival of various [evangelical](/wiki/Low_church) [free churches](/wiki/Free_church), and, towards the end of the century, [secularism](/wiki/Secularism), leading many to distance themselves from Church rituals. Leaving the Church of Sweden became legal with the so-called dissenter law of 1860, but only under the provision of entering another Christian denomination. The right to stand outside any religious denomination was formally established in the Law on [Freedom of religion](/wiki/Freedom_of_religion) in 1951. In 2000 the Church of Sweden was separated from the state and Sweden ceased to have any official church.

#### Religion in Sweden today[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Church of Sweden**[**[204]**](#cite_note-204) | | | | | | | |
| **year** | **population** | **church members** | **percentage** |  |  |  |  |
| 1972 | 8,146,000 | 7,754,784 | 95.2% |  |  |  |  |
| 1980 | 8,278,000 | 7,690,636 | 92.9% |  |  |  |  |
| 1990 | 8,573,000 | 7,630,350 | 89.0% |  |  |  |  |
| 2000 | 8,880,000 | 7,360,825 | 82.9% |  |  |  |  |
| 2005 | 9,048,000 | 6,967,498 | 77.0% |  |  |  |  |
| 2006 | 9,119,000 | 6,893,901 | 75.6% |  |  |  |  |
| 2007 | 9,179,000 | 6,820,161 | 74.3% |  |  |  |  |
| 2008 | 9,262,000 | 6,751,952 | 72.9% |  |  |  |  |
| 2009 | 9,340,682 | 6,664,064 | 71.3% |  |  |  |  |
| 2010 | 9,415,570 | 6,589,769 | 70.0% |  |  |  |  |
| 2011 | 9,482,855 | 6,519,889 | 68.8% |  |  |  |  |
| 2012 | 9,555,893 | 6,446,729 | 67.5% |  |  |  |  |
| 2013 | 9,644,864 | 6,357,508 | 65.9% |  |  |  |  |
| 2014 | 9,747,355 | 6,292,264 | 64.6%[[205]](#cite_note-205) |  |  |  |  |

At the end of 2014, 64.6% of Swedes belonged to the Church of Sweden (Lutheran); this number has been decreasing by about one percentage point a year for the last two decades.[[206]](#cite_note-206)[[207]](#cite_note-207)[[208]](#cite_note-208) Approximately 2% of the church's members regularly attend Sunday services.[[209]](#cite_note-209) The reason for the large number of inactive members is partly that, until 1996, children automatically became members at birth if at least one of the parents was a member. Since 1996, only children that are christened become members. Some 275,000 Swedes are today members of various free churches (where congregation attendance is much higher), and immigration has meant that there are now some 92,000 Roman Catholics and 100,000 [Eastern Orthodox Christians](/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church) living in Sweden.[[210]](#cite_note-210) The first Muslim congregation was established in 1949 when a small contingent of [Tatars](/wiki/Tatars) migrated from Finland, but Islam's presence in Sweden remained marginal until the 1960s when Sweden started to receive migrants from the Balkans and Turkey. Further immigration from North Africa and the Middle East have brought the estimated [Muslim population](/wiki/Islam_in_Sweden) to 500,000. However, only about 110,000 are members of a congregation and of these approximately 25,000 actively practise Islam in the sense that they pray five times a day and attend Friday prayer.[[211]](#cite_note-211)[[212]](#cite_note-212)[[213]](#cite_note-213)

#### Irreligion in Sweden Today[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

According to the [Eurobarometer Poll](/wiki/Eurobarometer) 2010,[[214]](#cite_note-214)

* **18%** of Swedish citizens responded that "they believe there is a god".
* **45%** answered that "they believe there is some sort of spirit or life force".
* **34%** answered that "they do not believe there is any sort of spirit, god, or life force".

According to a Demoskop study in 2015 about the beliefs of the Swedish showed that

* **21%** believed in a god (down from 35 percent in 2008).
* **16%** believed in ghosts
* **14%** believed in creationism or intelligent design[[215]](#cite_note-215)[[216]](#cite_note-216)

Sociology professor Phil Zuckerman claims that Swedes, despite a lack of belief in God, commonly question the term atheist, preferring to call themselves Christians while being content with remaining in the Church of Sweden.[[217]](#cite_note-217) Other research has shown that religion in Sweden continues to play a role in cultural identity.[[218]](#cite_note-218) This is evidenced by the fact that around 70 per cent of adults continue to remain members of the Lutheran Church[[219]](#cite_note-219) despite having to pay a [church tax](/wiki/Church_tax); moreover, rates of [baptism](/wiki/Baptism) remain high and [church weddings](/wiki/Christian_views_on_marriage) are increasing in Sweden.[[218]](#cite_note-218)

## Health[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) Healthcare in Sweden is similar in quality to other developed nations. Sweden ranks in the top five countries with respect to low [infant mortality](/wiki/Infant_mortality). It also ranks high in [life expectancy](/wiki/Life_expectancy) and in safe [drinking water](/wiki/Drinking_water). A person seeking care first contacts a clinic for a doctor's appointment, and may then be referred to a specialist by the clinic physician, who may in turn recommend either in-patient or out-patient treatment, or an elective care option. The health care is governed by the 21 [landsting](/wiki/County_Councils_of_Sweden) of Sweden and is mainly funded by taxes, with nominal fees for patients.

## Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Entrance_hall_of_Uppsala_University_main_building.jpg)[Uppsala University](/wiki/Uppsala_University) (established 1477) Children aged 1–5 years old are guaranteed a place in a public [kindergarten](/wiki/Kindergarten) ([Template:Lang-sv](/wiki/Template:Lang-sv) or, colloquially, *dagis*). Between the ages of 6 and 16, children attend compulsory comprehensive school. In the [Programme for International Student Assessment](/wiki/Programme_for_International_Student_Assessment) (PISA), Swedish 15-year-old pupils score close to the OECD average.[[220]](#cite_note-220) After completing the 9th grade, about 90% of the students continue with a three-year upper secondary school (*gymnasium*), which can lead to both a job qualification or entrance eligibility to university. The school system is largely financed by taxes.

The Swedish government treats public and independent schools equally[[221]](#cite_note-221) by introducing [education vouchers](/wiki/Education_voucher) in 1992 as one of the first countries in the world after the Netherlands. Anyone can establish a for-profit school and the municipality must pay new schools the same amount as municipal schools get. School lunch is free for all students in Sweden, and providing breakfast is also encouraged.[[222]](#cite_note-222) There are a number of different [universities and colleges in Sweden](/wiki/List_of_universities_in_Sweden), the oldest and largest of which are situated in [Uppsala](/wiki/Uppsala_University), [Lund](/wiki/Lund_University), [Gothenburg](/wiki/University_of_Gothenburg) and [Stockholm](/wiki/Stockholm_University). In 2000, 32% of Swedish people held a [tertiary degree](/wiki/Tertiary_education), making the country 5th in the OECD in that category.[[223]](#cite_note-223) Along with several other European countries, the government also subsidises tuition of international students pursuing a degree at Swedish institutions, although a recent bill passed in the Riksdag will limit this subsidy to students from EEA countries and Switzerland.[[224]](#cite_note-224)

## Immigration[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Immigrants (red) and emigrants (blue), Sweden 1850–2007](/wiki/File:Invandrare_utvandrare_Sverige_1850-2007.svg)

Immigration has been a major source of [population growth](/wiki/Population_growth) and cultural change throughout much of the [history of Sweden](/wiki/History_of_Sweden), and in recent centuries the country has been transformed from a nation of net emigration, ending after World War I, to a nation of net immigration, from World War II onwards. The economic, social, and political aspects of immigration have caused controversy regarding ethnicity, economic benefits, jobs for non-immigrants, settlement patterns, impact on upward [social mobility](/wiki/Social_mobility), crime, and voting behaviour.[[225]](#cite_note-225) There are no exact numbers on the [ethnic](/wiki/Ethnicity) background of migrants and their descendants in Sweden because the Swedish government does not base any statistics on ethnicity. This is, however, not to be confused with the migrants' [national backgrounds](/wiki/Nationality), which are recorded.

In 1998, there were 1,746,921 inhabitants of a foreign background (foreign-born and children of international migrants), comprising around 20% of the Swedish population. Around 1,216,659, or 70%, came from Scandinavia and the rest of Europe and 530,262, or 30%, came from the rest of the world.<ref name=Westin>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

Around 27% or 2,000,000 inhabitants of Sweden had a full or partial foreign background in 2011.[[226]](#cite_note-226)[[227]](#cite_note-227)[[228]](#cite_note-228) Of these inhabitants; 1,427,296 persons living in Sweden were born abroad. In addition, 430,253 persons were born in Sweden to two parents born abroad and another 666,723 persons had one parent born abroad (with the other parent born in Sweden). Thus, with the total population in 2011 being 9,482,855, roughly 15% of the population was born abroad, 4.5% of the population was born in Sweden to two parents born abroad, and another 7% was born in Sweden to one parent born abroad. Around 26.5% of the Swedish population is, at least partly, of foreign descent.[[226]](#cite_note-226) [thumb|Population by ancestry, Sweden 2002–2011](/wiki/File:Number_of_persons_by_foreign_Swedish_background_in_2002-2011.jpg) According to [Eurostat](/wiki/Eurostat), in 2010, there were 1.33 million foreign-born residents in Sweden, corresponding to 14.3% of the total population. Of these, 859 000 (9.2%) were born outside the EU and 477 000 (5.1%) were born in another EU Member State.[[229]](#cite_note-229)[[230]](#cite_note-230) In 2009, immigration reached its highest level since records began, with 102,280 people emigrating to Sweden.[[231]](#cite_note-231) Immigrants in Sweden are mostly concentrated in the urban areas of Svealand and Götaland.[[230]](#cite_note-230) Since the early 1970s, immigration to Sweden has been mostly due to refugee migration and family reunification from countries in the Middle East and Latin America.[[232]](#cite_note-232) In 2013, Sweden granted 29,000 people asylum;[[233]](#cite_note-233) an increase of 67% compared to 2012.[[233]](#cite_note-233) The ten largest groups of foreign-born persons in the Swedish [civil registry](/wiki/Civil_registry) in 2012 were from:[[234]](#cite_note-234)# [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) (163,867)

1. [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) (127,860)
2. [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) (75,323)
3. [Template:Flagdeco](/wiki/Template:Flagdeco) Former [Yugoslavia](/wiki/Federal_Republic_of_Yugoslavia) (69,269)
4. [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) (65,649)
5. [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) (56,595)
6. [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) (48,731)
7. [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) (45,085)
8. [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) (44,209)
9. [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) (43,966)

## Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Nationalmuseum_Stockholm.jpg)[Nationalmuseum](/wiki/Nationalmuseum) in Stockholm Sweden has many authors of worldwide recognition including [August Strindberg](/wiki/August_Strindberg), [Astrid Lindgren](/wiki/Astrid_Lindgren), and Nobel Prize winners [Selma Lagerlöf](/wiki/Selma_Lagerlöf) and [Harry Martinson](/wiki/Harry_Martinson). In total seven [Nobel Prizes in Literature](/wiki/Nobel_Prize_in_Literature) have been awarded to Swedes. The nation's most well-known artists are painters such as [Carl Larsson](/wiki/Carl_Larsson) and [Anders Zorn](/wiki/Anders_Zorn), and the sculptors [Tobias Sergel](/wiki/Tobias_Sergel) and [Carl Milles](/wiki/Carl_Milles).

Swedish 20th-century culture is noted by pioneering works in the early days of cinema, with [Mauritz Stiller](/wiki/Mauritz_Stiller) and [Victor Sjöström](/wiki/Victor_Sjöström). In the 1920s–1980s, the filmmaker [Ingmar Bergman](/wiki/Ingmar_Bergman) and actors [Greta Garbo](/wiki/Greta_Garbo) and [Ingrid Bergman](/wiki/Ingrid_Bergman) became internationally noted people within cinema. More recently, the films of [Lukas Moodysson](/wiki/Lukas_Moodysson) and [Lasse Hallström](/wiki/Lasse_Hallström) have received international recognition.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s Sweden was seen as an international leader in what is now referred to as the "[sexual revolution](/wiki/Sexual_revolution)", with gender equality having particularly been promoted.[[235]](#cite_note-235) At the present time, the number of single people is one of the highest in the world. The early Swedish film [*I Am Curious (Yellow)*](/wiki/I_Am_Curious_(Yellow)) (1967) reflected a liberal view of sexuality, including scenes of love making that caught international attention, and introduced the concept of the "Swedish sin" that had been introduced earlier in the US with Ingmar Bergman's [*Summer with Monika*](/wiki/Summer_with_Monika)*.*

The image of "hot love and cold people" emerged. Sexual liberalism was seen as part of modernisation process that by breaking down traditional borders would lead to the emancipation of natural forces and desires.[[236]](#cite_note-236) Sweden has also become very liberal towards homosexuality, as is reflected in the popular acceptance of films such as [*Show Me Love*](/wiki/Fucking_Åmål), which is about two young lesbians in the small Swedish town of Åmål. Since 1 May 2009, Sweden repealed its "registered partnership" laws and fully replaced them with [gender-neutral marriage](/wiki/Gender-neutral_marriage),[[237]](#cite_note-237) Sweden also offers [domestic partnerships](/wiki/Domestic_partnership) for both same-sex and opposite-sex couples. Cohabitation (*sammanboende*) by couples of all ages, including teenagers as well as elderly couples, is widespread. Recently, Sweden is experiencing a baby boom.[[238]](#cite_note-238)

### Music[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|left|The Swedish band](/wiki/File:ABBA_-_TopPop_1974_5.png) [ABBA](/wiki/ABBA) in April 1974, a few days after they won the [Eurovision Song Contest](/wiki/Eurovision_Song_Contest_1974). Sweden has a rich musical tradition, ranging from mediaeval folk ballads to [hip hop music](/wiki/Swedish_hip_hop). The music of the pre-Christian Norse has been lost to history, although historical re-creations have been attempted based on instruments found in Viking sites. The instruments used were the [*lur*](/wiki/Lur) (a sort of trumpet), simple string instruments, wooden flutes and drums. It is possible that the Viking musical legacy lives on in some of the old Swedish folk music. Sweden has a significant [folk-music](/wiki/Music_of_Sweden) scene, both in the traditional style as well as more modern interpretations which often mix in elements of rock and jazz. There is also Sami music, called the [*joik*](/wiki/Joik), which is actually a type of chant which is part of the traditional Saami animistic spirituality but has gained recognition in the international world of folk music. Sweden's most classic and notable composers includes [Carl Michael Bellman](/wiki/Carl_Michael_Bellman) and [Franz Berwald](/wiki/Franz_Berwald).

Sweden also has a prominent choral music tradition, deriving in part from the cultural importance of Swedish folk songs. In fact, out of a population of 9.5 million, it is estimated that five to six hundred thousand people sing in choirs.[[239]](#cite_note-239) In 2007, with over 800 million dollars in revenue, Sweden was the third-largest music exporter in the world and surpassed only by the US and the UK.[[240]](#cite_note-240)<ref name=autogenerated1>[Interesting facts about EU countries](http://www.webcitation.org/65MvZYlA4). casgroup.fiu.edu</ref>[Template:Better source](/wiki/Template:Better_source) According to one source 2013, Sweden produces the most chart hits per capita in the world, followed by the UK and the USA.[[241]](#cite_note-241) [ABBA](/wiki/ABBA) was one of the first internationally well known popular music bands from Sweden, and still ranks among the [most prominent bands in the world](/wiki/List_of_best-selling_music_artists), with about 370 million records sold. With ABBA, Sweden entered into a new era, in which [Swedish pop music](/wiki/Swedish_pop_music) gained international prominence. [thumb|left|The](/wiki/File:GoteborgsOperan.jpg) [Gothenburg Opera House](/wiki/The_Göteborg_Opera). There have been many other internationally successful bands since, such as [Roxette](/wiki/Roxette), [Ace of Base](/wiki/Ace_of_Base), [Europe](/wiki/Europe_(band)), [A-teens](/wiki/A-teens), [The Cardigans](/wiki/The_Cardigans), [Robyn](/wiki/Robyn), [The Hives](/wiki/The_Hives) and [Soundtrack of Our Lives](/wiki/Soundtrack_of_Our_Lives), to name some of the biggest.

Sweden has also become known for a large number of [heavy metal](/wiki/Heavy_metal_music) bands, including [Bathory](/wiki/Bathory_(band)), [Opeth](/wiki/Opeth), [Amon Amarth](/wiki/Amon_Amarth) and [Ghost](/wiki/Ghost_(Swedish_band)). The renowned [neo-classical power metal](/wiki/Neo-classical_metal) guitarist [Yngwie Malmsteen](/wiki/Yngwie_Malmsteen) is also from Sweden.

Starting in the 1990s, [Denniz Pop's](/wiki/Denniz_Pop) [Cheiron Studios](/wiki/Cheiron_Studios) became an international hit factory, with his disciple [Max Martin](/wiki/Max_Martin) responsible for [Britney Spears'](/wiki/Britney_Spears) breakthrough songs and for shaping the whole boy-band boom at the turn of the millennium with global hits for groups like the [Backstreet Boys](/wiki/Backstreet_Boys) and ['N Sync](/wiki/'N_Sync). In the mid-2000s, Martin came back with a more rock-tinged sound and produced major hits with artists such as [Kelly Clarkson](/wiki/Kelly_Clarkson), [Pink](/wiki/Pink_(singer)) and [Katy Perry](/wiki/Katy_Perry). Another producer worth mentioning is [RedOne](/wiki/RedOne), a Moroccan-Swede who is the creator of a slew of hits for [Lady Gaga](/wiki/Lady_Gaga).

[Sweden](/wiki/Sweden_in_the_Eurovision_Song_Contest) is one of the most successful competing nations at the [Eurovision Song Contest](/wiki/Eurovision_Song_Contest), with a total of six victories in the contest, 1974, 1984, 1991, 1999, 2012, 2015 and only right behind Ireland who have seven wins. In Eurovision Song Contest each participating country submits an original song to be performed on live television and radio, however no restriction on the nationality of the songwriter and the artist exists which has resulted in countries being represented by songwriters and artist who are not nationals of that country. In recent years Swedish songwriters have been involved in the writing entirely or partly of entries from several countries including Sweden - for instance, in the Eurovision Song Contest 2012, Swedish songwriters and producers featured in 10 out of the 42 songs that qualified for the Contest; In 2013, 7 songs out of the 39 songs in the contest; In 2014, 7 songs out of 37 songs in the contest; In 2015, 8 songs out of 40 songs in the contest: In 2016, 12 songs out of 42 songs in the contest.

Sweden has a rather lively jazz scene. During the last sixty years or so it has attained a remarkably high artistic standard, stimulated by domestic as well as external influences and experiences. The Centre for Swedish Folk Music and Jazz Research has published an overview of jazz in Sweden by Lars Westin.[[242]](#cite_note-242)

### Architecture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [left|thumb|](/wiki/File:Djurgardsbron_2008.jpg)[Djurgårdsbron](/wiki/Djurgårdsbron) Before the 13th century almost all buildings were made of timber, but a shift began towards stone. Early Swedish stone buildings are the [Romanesque](/wiki/Romanesque_architecture) churches on the country side. As so happens, many of them were built in Scania and are in effect Danish churches. This would include the [Lund Cathedral](/wiki/Lund_Cathedral) from the 11th century and the somewhat younger church in [Dalby](/wiki/Dalby,_Lund), but also many early [Gothic](/wiki/Gothic_(architecture)) churches built through influences of the Hanseatic League, such as in Ystad, Malmö and Helsingborg.

Cathedrals in other parts of Sweden were also built as seats of Sweden's bishops. The [Skara Cathedral](/wiki/Skara_Cathedral) is of bricks from the 14th century, and the [Uppsala Cathedral](/wiki/Uppsala_Cathedral) in the 15th. In 1230 the foundations of the [Linköping](/wiki/Linköping) Cathedral were made, the material was there [limestone](/wiki/Limestone), but the building took some 250 years to finish.

Among older structures are also some significant fortresses and other historical buildings such as at [Borgholm Castle](/wiki/Borgholm_Castle), [Halltorps Manor](/wiki/Halltorps_Manor) and [Eketorp](/wiki/Eketorp) fortress on the island Öland, the [Nyköping](/wiki/Nyköping) fortress and the [Visby city wall](/wiki/Visby_city_wall).

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Kalmar.jpg)[Kalmar Cathedral](/wiki/Kalmar_Cathedral) Around 1520 Sweden was out of the [Middle Ages](/wiki/Middle_Ages) and united under King Gustav Vasa, who immediately initiated grand mansions, castles and fortresses to be built. Some of the more magnificent include the Kalmar fortress, the [Gripsholm Castle](/wiki/Gripsholm_Castle) and the one at [Vadstena](/wiki/Vadstena).

In the next two centuries, Sweden was designated by [Baroque architecture](/wiki/Baroque_architecture) and later the [rococo](/wiki/Rococo). Notable projects from that time include the city Karlskrona, which has now also been declared a World Heritage Site and the [Drottningholm Palace](/wiki/Drottningholm_Palace).

1930 was the year of the great Stockholm exhibition, which marked the breakthrough of [Functionalism](/wiki/Functionalism_(architecture)), or "funkis" as it became known. The style came to dominate in the following decades. Some notable projects of this kind were the [Million Programme](/wiki/Million_Programme), offering affordable living in large apartment complexes.

### Media[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Headquarters of](/wiki/File:SVT_office.jpg) [Sveriges Television](/wiki/Sveriges_Television) in Stockholm Swedes are among the greatest consumers of newspapers in the world, and nearly every town is served by a local paper. The country's main quality morning papers are [*Dagens Nyheter*](/wiki/Dagens_Nyheter) (liberal), [*Göteborgs-Posten*](/wiki/Göteborgs-Posten) (liberal), [*Svenska Dagbladet*](/wiki/Svenska_Dagbladet) (liberal conservative) and [*Sydsvenska Dagbladet*](/wiki/Sydsvenska_Dagbladet) (liberal). The two largest evening [tabloids](/wiki/Tabloid_(newspaper_format)) are [*Aftonbladet*](/wiki/Aftonbladet) (social democratic) and [*Expressen*](/wiki/Expressen) (liberal). The ad-financed, free international morning paper, [*Metro International*](/wiki/Metro_International), was originally founded in Stockholm, Sweden. The country's news is reported in English by, among others, [*The Local*](/wiki/The_Local) (liberal).[[243]](#cite_note-243) The public broadcasting companies held a monopoly on radio and television for a long time in Sweden. Licence funded radio broadcasts started in 1925. A second radio network was started in 1954 and a third opened 1962 in response to pirate radio stations. Non-profit [community radio](/wiki/Community_radio#Sweden) was allowed in 1979 and in 1993 commercial local radio started.

The licence-funded television service was officially launched in 1956. A second channel, [TV2](/wiki/SVT2), was launched in 1969. These two channels (operated by [Sveriges Television](/wiki/Sveriges_Television) since the late 1970s) held a monopoly until the 1980s when cable and satellite television became available. The first Swedish language satellite service was [TV3](/wiki/TV3_(Sweden)) which started broadcasting from London in 1987. It was followed by [Kanal 5](/wiki/Kanal_5_(Sweden)) in 1989 (then known as Nordic Channel) and [TV4](/wiki/TV4_(Sweden)) in 1990.

In 1991 the government announced it would begin taking applications from private television companies wishing to broadcast on the [terrestrial network](/wiki/Terrestrial_television). TV4, which had previously been broadcasting via satellite, was granted a permit and began its terrestrial broadcasts in 1992, becoming the first private channel to broadcast television content from within the country.

Around half the population are connected to cable television. [Digital terrestrial television in Sweden](/wiki/Digital_terrestrial_television_in_Sweden) started in 1999 and the last analogue terrestrial broadcasts were terminated in 2007.

### Literature[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [upright|thumb|The writer and playwright](/wiki/File:Portrait_of_August_Strindberg_by_Richard_Bergh_1905.jpg) [August Strindberg](/wiki/August_Strindberg).

The first literary text from Sweden is the [Rök Runestone](/wiki/Rök_Runestone), carved during the Viking Age c. 800 AD. With the conversion of the land to Christianity around 1100 AD, Sweden entered the [Middle Ages](/wiki/Middle_Ages), during which monastic writers preferred to use Latin. Therefore, there are only a few texts in the [Old Swedish](/wiki/Swedish_language#Old_Swedish) from that period. Swedish literature only flourished when the Swedish language was standardised in the 16th century, a standardisation largely due to the full translation of the Bible into Swedish in 1541. This translation is the so-called [Gustav Vasa Bible](/wiki/Gustav_Vasa_Bible).

With improved education and the freedom brought by [secularisation](/wiki/Secularisation), the 17th century saw several notable authors develop the Swedish language further. Some key figures include [Georg Stiernhielm](/wiki/Georg_Stiernhielm) (17th century), who was the first to write classical poetry in Swedish; [Johan Henric Kellgren](/wiki/Johan_Henric_Kellgren) (18th century), the first to write fluent Swedish prose; Carl Michael Bellman (late 18th century), the first writer of [burlesque](/wiki/Burlesque) ballads; and August Strindberg (late 19th century), a socio-realistic writer and playwright who won worldwide fame. The early 20th century continued to produce notable authors, such as Selma Lagerlöf, (Nobel laureate 1909), [Verner von Heidenstam](/wiki/Verner_von_Heidenstam) (Nobel laureate 1916) and [Pär Lagerkvist](/wiki/Pär_Lagerkvist) (Nobel laureate 1951).

In recent decades, a handful of Swedish writers have established themselves internationally, including the detective novelist [Henning Mankell](/wiki/Henning_Mankell) and the writer of spy fiction [Jan Guillou](/wiki/Jan_Guillou). The Swedish writer to have made the most lasting impression on world literature is the children's book writer Astrid Lindgren, and her books about [Pippi Longstocking](/wiki/Pippi_Longstocking), [Emil](/wiki/Emil_i_Lönneberga), and others. In 2008, the second best-selling fiction author in the world was [Stieg Larsson](/wiki/Stieg_Larsson), whose *Millennium* series of crime novels is being published posthumously to critical acclaim.[[244]](#cite_note-244) Larsson drew heavily on the work of Lindgren by basing his central character, Lisbeth Salander, on Longstocking.[[245]](#cite_note-245)

### Holidays[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=39)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Valborgsbrasa-1.jpg)[Walpurgis Night](/wiki/Walpurgis_Night) bonfire in Sweden. Apart from traditional Protestant [Christian holidays](/wiki/Liturgical_year), Sweden also celebrates some unique holidays, some of a pre-Christian tradition. They include [Midsummer](/wiki/Midsummer) celebrating the summer [solstice](/wiki/Solstice); [Walpurgis Night](/wiki/Walpurgis_Night) (*Valborgsmässoafton*) on 30 April lighting bonfires; and Labour Day or Mayday on 1 May is dedicated to socialist demonstrations. The day of giver-of-light [Saint Lucia](/wiki/Saint_Lucy), 13 December, is widely acknowledged in elaborate celebrations which betoken its Italian origin and commence the month-long Christmas season.

6[Template:NbspJune](/wiki/Template:Nbsp) is the [National Day of Sweden](/wiki/National_holiday_of_Sweden) and has since 2005 been a public holiday. Furthermore, there are [official flag day](/wiki/Flag_days_in_Sweden) observances and a [Namesdays in Sweden](/wiki/Namesdays_in_Sweden) calendar. In August many Swedes have *kräftskivor* (crayfish dinner parties). [Martin of Tours](/wiki/Martin_of_Tours) Eve is celebrated in [Scania](/wiki/Scania) in November with *Mårten Gås* parties, where roast goose and [*svartsoppa*](/wiki/Svartsoppa) ('black soup', made of goose stock, fruit, spices, spirits and goose blood) are served. The [Sami](/wiki/Sami_people), one of Sweden's indigenous minorities, have their holiday on 6 February and Scania celebrate their Scanian Flag day on the third Sunday in July.

### Cuisine[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=40)]

[thumb|left|Swedish saffron buns](/wiki/File:2005_baking_of_saffron_buns_04.jpg) [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Swedish knäckebröd (](/wiki/File:Knaeckebroed.jpg)[crisp bread](/wiki/Crisp_bread))

Swedish cuisine, like that of the other [Scandinavian](/wiki/Scandinavia) countries ([Denmark](/wiki/Cuisine_of_Denmark), [Norway](/wiki/Cuisine_of_Norway) and [Finland](/wiki/Cuisine_of_Finland)), was traditionally simple. Fish (particularly [herring](/wiki/Herring)), meat, potatoes and [dairy products](/wiki/Dairy_products) played prominent roles. Spices were sparse. Famous preparations include Swedish meatballs, traditionally served with gravy, boiled potatoes and [lingonberry jam](/wiki/Lingonberry_jam); pancakes; [*lutfisk*](/wiki/Lutefisk); and the [smörgåsbord](/wiki/Smörgåsbord), or lavish buffet. [*Akvavit*](/wiki/Akvavit) is a popular alcoholic [distilled beverage](/wiki/Distilled_beverage), and the drinking of [*snaps*](/wiki/Snaps) is of cultural importance. The traditional flat and dry [crisp bread](/wiki/Crisp_bread) has developed into several contemporary variants. Regionally important foods are the [*surströmming*](/wiki/Surströmming) (a fermented fish) in northern Sweden and [eel](/wiki/Eel) in Scania in southern Sweden.

Swedish traditional dishes, some of which are many hundreds of years old, others perhaps a century or less, are still a very important part of Swedish everyday meals, in spite of the fact that modern-day Swedish cuisine adopts many international dishes.

In August, at the traditional feast known as crayfish party, [*kräftskiva*](/wiki/Kräftskiva), Swedes eat large amounts of [crayfish](/wiki/Crayfish) boiled with dill.

### Cinema[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=41)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Swedes have been fairly prominent in the film area through the years. A number of Swedish people have found success in Hollywood, including Ingrid Bergman, Greta Garbo and [Max von Sydow](/wiki/Max_von_Sydow). Amongst several directors who have made internationally successful films can be mentioned Ingmar Bergman, Lukas Moodysson and Lasse Hallström.

### Fashion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=42)]

Interest in fashion is big in Sweden and the country is headquartering famous brands like [Hennes & Mauritz](/wiki/H&M) (operating as H&M), [J. Lindeberg](/wiki/J._Lindeberg) (operating as JL), [Acne](/wiki/Acne_Jeans), [Lindex](/wiki/Lindex), [Odd Molly](/wiki/Odd_Molly), [Cheap Monday](/wiki/Cheap_Monday), [Gant](/wiki/Gant_U.S.A.), [WESC](/wiki/WESC), [Filippa K](/wiki/Filippa_K), and [Nakkna](/wiki/Nakkna) within its borders. These companies, however, are composed largely of buyers who import fashionable goods from throughout Europe and America, continuing the trend of Swedish business toward multinational economic dependency like many of its neighbours.

### Sports[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=43)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|Former World No. 1 tennis player](/wiki/File:Björn_Borg2.jpg) [Björn Borg](/wiki/Björn_Borg) Sport activities are a national movement with half of the population actively participating in organised sporting activities. The two main spectator sports are [football](/wiki/Association_football) and [ice hockey](/wiki/Ice_hockey). Second to football, [horse sports](/wiki/Horse#Sport) have the highest number of practitioners who are mostly women. Thereafter, golf, [track and field](/wiki/Track_and_field), and the [team sports](/wiki/Team_sport) of [handball](/wiki/Handball), [floorball](/wiki/Floorball), basketball and [bandy](/wiki/Bandy) are the most popular.

The Swedish national men's ice hockey team, affectionately known as [*Tre Kronor*](/wiki/Sweden_men's_national_ice_hockey_team) (English: [Three Crowns](/wiki/Three_Crowns); the national symbol of Sweden), is regarded as one of the best in the world. The team has won the [World Championships](/wiki/Ice_Hockey_World_Championships) nine times, placing them third in the all-time medal count. Tre Kronor also won Olympic gold medals in [1994](/wiki/Ice_hockey_at_the_1994_Winter_Olympics) and [2006](/wiki/Ice_hockey_at_the_2006_Winter_Olympics). In 2006, Tre Kronor became the first national hockey team to win both the Olympic and world championships in the same year. The [Swedish national football team](/wiki/Sweden_national_football_team) has seen some success at the World Cup in the past, finishing second when they hosted the tournament in 1958, and third twice, in [1950](/wiki/1950_FIFA_World_Cup) and [1994](/wiki/1994_FIFA_World_Cup). Athletics has enjoyed a surge in popularity due to several successful athletes in recent years, such as [Carolina Klüft](/wiki/Carolina_Klüft) and [Stefan Holm](/wiki/Stefan_Holm).

Sweden hosted the [1912 Summer Olympics](/wiki/1912_Summer_Olympics), [Equestrian at the 1956 Summer Olympics](/wiki/Equestrian_at_the_1956_Summer_Olympics) and the [FIFA World Cup](/wiki/FIFA_World_Cup) in [1958](/wiki/1958_FIFA_World_Cup). Other big sports events include the [UEFA Euro 1992](/wiki/UEFA_Euro_1992), [1995 FIFA Women's World Cup](/wiki/1995_FIFA_Women's_World_Cup), [1995 World Championships in Athletics](/wiki/1995_World_Championships_in_Athletics), [UEFA Women's Euro 2013](/wiki/UEFA_Women's_Euro_2013), and several championships of ice hockey, [curling](/wiki/Curling), athletics, [skiing](/wiki/Skiing), bandy, [figure skating](/wiki/Figure_skating) and swimming.

Successful football players include [Gunnar Nordahl](/wiki/Gunnar_Nordahl), [Gunnar Gren](/wiki/Gunnar_Gren), [Nils Liedholm](/wiki/Nils_Liedholm), [Henrik Larsson](/wiki/Henrik_Larsson), [Fredrik Ljungberg](/wiki/Fredrik_Ljungberg) and [Zlatan Ibrahimović](/wiki/Zlatan_Ibrahimović). Successful tennis players include former world number 1 players [Björn Borg](/wiki/Björn_Borg), [Mats Wilander](/wiki/Mats_Wilander) and [Stefan Edberg](/wiki/Stefan_Edberg). Other famous Swedish athletes include the [heavyweight](/wiki/Heavyweight) [boxing](/wiki/Boxing) champion and [International Boxing Hall of Famer](/wiki/International_Boxing_Hall_of_Fame) [Ingemar Johansson](/wiki/Ingemar_Johansson); [World Golf Hall of Famer](/wiki/World_Golf_Hall_of_Fame) [Annika Sörenstam](/wiki/Annika_Sörenstam), and multiple World Championships and Olympics medalist in table tennis [Jan-Ove Waldner](/wiki/Jan-Ove_Waldner). Due to its northerly latitude numerous world class winter sports athletes have come from Sweden. This includes alpine skiers [Ingemar Stenmark](/wiki/Ingemar_Stenmark), [Anja Pärson](/wiki/Anja_Pärson) and [Pernilla Wiberg](/wiki/Pernilla_Wiberg) as well as cross country-skiers [Gunde Svan](/wiki/Gunde_Svan), [Thomas Wassberg](/wiki/Thomas_Wassberg), [Charlotte Kalla](/wiki/Charlotte_Kalla) and [Marcus Hellner](/wiki/Marcus_Hellner), all Olympic gold medalists.

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=44)]

[Template:Wikipedia books](/wiki/Template:Wikipedia_books)

* [Outline of Sweden](/wiki/Outline_of_Sweden)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=45)]

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[Template:Sister project links](/wiki/Template:Sister_project_links)

* [Template:CIA World Factbook link](/wiki/Template:CIA_World_Factbook_link)
* [Sweden](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/576478/Sweden) entry at [*Encyclopædia Britannica*](/wiki/Encyclopædia_Britannica)
* [Sweden](http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/govpubs/for/sweden.htm) from *UCB Libraries GovPubs*
* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
* [Sweden profile](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17955808) from the [BBC News](/wiki/BBC_News)
* [Template:Wikiatlas](/wiki/Template:Wikiatlas)
* [Template:Osmrelation-inline](/wiki/Template:Osmrelation-inline)
* [Key Development Forecasts for Sweden](http://www.ifs.du.edu/ifs/frm_CountryProfile.aspx?Country=SE) from [International Futures](/wiki/International_Futures)
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* <http://www.circle.lu.se/upload/CIRCLE/workingpapers/200906_Schoen.pdf> Technological Waves and Economic Growth in Sweden 1850–2005
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* [vifanord](http://www.vifanord.de/index.php?id=1&L=1&rd=243343734) – A digital library that provides scientific information on the Nordic and Baltic countries as well as the Baltic region as a whole

Public sector

* [Sweden.se](http://www.sweden.se/) — Sweden's official portal
* [The Swedish Parliament](http://www.riksdagen.se/en/) – Official website
* [The Government of Sweden](http://www.government.se/) – Official website
* [The Royal Court](http://www.kungahuset.se/royalcourt.4.367010ad11497db6cba800054503.html) – Official website of the Swedish Monarchy

News media

* [Radio Sweden](http://www.radiosweden.org/) – Public service
* [Sveriges Television](http://www.svt.se/) [Template:Sv icon](/wiki/Template:Sv_icon) – Public service
* [Dagens Nyheter](http://www.dn.se/) [Template:Sv icon](/wiki/Template:Sv_icon)
* [Svenska Dagbladet](http://www.svd.se/) [Template:Sv icon](/wiki/Template:Sv_icon)
* [The Local – Sweden's news in English](http://www.thelocal.se/) – Independent English language news site

Trade

* [World Bank Summary Trade Statistics Sweden](http://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/Country/SWE/Year/2012/Summary)

Travel

* [VisitSweden.com](http://www.visitsweden.com/) – Official travel and tourism website for Sweden
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